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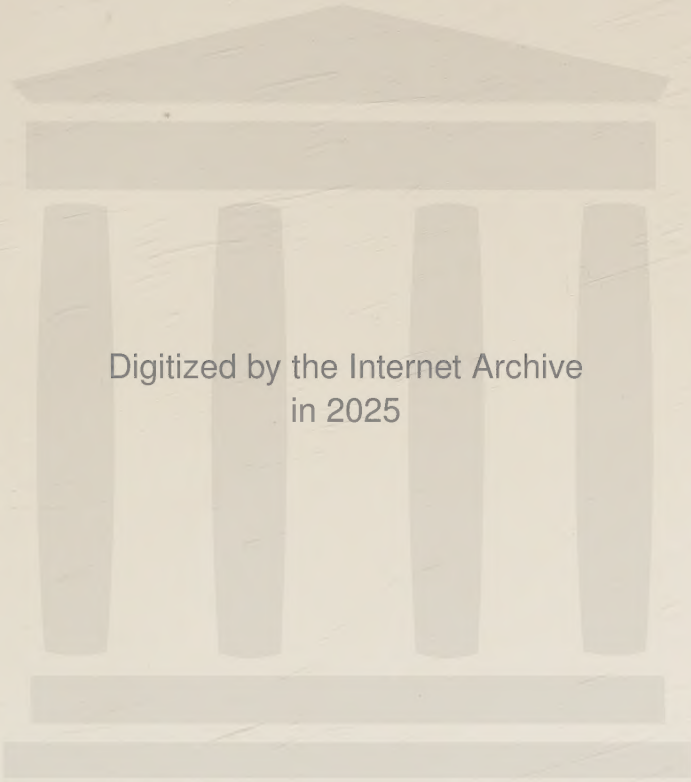
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SAN JUAN DE NICARAGUA.

Eastern Terminus of the proposed Inter-Oceanic Canal.

VOLCANO OF COSEGUINA.

ISLAND OF MANGUIRA.

ISLAND OF CONCHAGUITA.

VOLCANO OF AMAPALA OR CONCHAGUA.

ENTRANCE TO THE BAY OF FONSECA, FROM THE ISLAND OF TIGRE.

Probable Western Terminus of the proposed Inter-Oceanic Canal.

NICARAGUA;

ITS

PEOPLE, SCENERY, MONUMENTS,

AND THE PROPOSED

INTEROCEANIC CANAL.

WITH

NUMEROUS ORIGINAL MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

BY E. G. SQUIER.

LATE CHARGE D' AFFAIRES OF THE UNITED STATES TO THE REPUBLICS OF CENTRAL AMERICA.

"HIC LOCUS EST GEMINI JANUA VASTA MARIS."—OVID.

TWO VOLUMES COMPLETE IN ONE.

NEW YORK:

D. APPLETON & CO., PUBLISHERS.

346 & 348 BROADWAY.

M DCCC.LVI.

F
1523
S77
1851

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1851, by
E. G. SQUIER,
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PREFACE.

The character in which I visited Nicaragua, of an accredited Representative of the United States, made me the witness of many extraordinary demonstrations of respect and affection for my country, and the recipient of numerous marked attentions, private and popular. It enabled me to see the country under a very favorable aspect, enlivened everywhere by cheerful and enthusiastic assemblages, which the presence of an Envoy of the Great Republic of the North, had inspired with passionate hopes of their own future glory and prosperity. And as it is my object to give a true picture, not only of the country, but of the character, condition, and relations of the people, I have not hesitated to refer to many scenes and occurrences, in which, as a public man, I received singular marks of favor. With the judicious reader I am not afraid to trust myself in these descriptions; I am willing even to risk the imputation of vanity, if I can thereby awaken a true sympathy in the hearts of the American people, for their simple, but unfortunate friends and allies in Central America; or contribute, however slightly, to impress the great truth upon this nation,

that the United States is the natural head of the great American family, and that it is a duty which it owes, alike to God and man, to extend its advice, its encouragement, and its support to the oppressed and struggling Republics of Central America.

Yet, with all the latitude which I have ventured to give myself in these respects, there are many things that the unofficial visitor might mention and remark upon without impropriety, to which, for obvious reasons, I cannot refer. Nor can I, in the following pages, make anything more than a very limited use of my journal, which, whatever may be its value hereafter in illustrating the *transition period* of the country in question, is, from necessity, full of references to political transactions and events, upon which it is not my present purpose to speak; and to persons whose names it would not be delicate or proper to introduce into these pages.

I have divided my work into five parts or divisions, as follows:

I. A Geographical and Topographical Account of Nicaragua, and of the other States of Central America, with observations on their climate, agricultural and mineral productions, and general resources.

II. A Narrative of my residence in Nicaragua, containing an account of my explorations of its aboriginal monuments, notices of the people, their habits, customs, and modes of life, descriptions of scenery, etc. This narrative might have been greatly amplified, but it is believed that it contains enough to enable the reader to form a very accurate idea of

the great natural beauty of the country, and of the character and condition of its people.

III. An Account of the Geography and Topography of Nicaragua, as connected with the proposed Interoceanic Canal; a Historical Sketch of the various negociations in respect to that enterprize; and also some speculations as to the probable commercial and political results of its construction. In this part, I have written without fear or concealment, and with no design of subserving the interests of any set of men. I regard the proposed work as one of vital importance to our country, which should be kept free from every taint of mere speculation, and be pursued in entire good faith by those who may connect themselves with it. Any delinquency, in this respect, is treachery to the interests alike of Nicaragua and the United States, which it would be the duty of every American to expose to public reprobation. The facts contained in this part may be relied on, as being generally, and in all important respects, entirely accurate. Should there be any errors, it must be remembered that my means of investigation were imperfect, and that nothing more than approximate accuracy can be reached, except by actual and detailed surveys.

IV. Notes on the Aborigines of the country, with such original and accumulated information respecting their geographical distribution and relations, languages, institutions, customs and religion, as shall serve to define their ethnical position, in respect to the other semi-civilized, aboriginal nations of this continent.

V. An Outline of the Political History of Central America since its independence of Spain. Previous to 1839 Nicaragua constituted a part of the Republic of Central America. In that year the Republic was dissolved. But the history of Nicaragua, both before and since that event, has been so involved with that of the country at large as to preclude its separate consideration. I have, therefore, been compelled to trace the outlines of the history of the entire country, in order to show the causes which have reduced the State in question to its present unfortunate condition. Some of the most conspicuous actors in the political drama which has been enacted in Central America are still living; but, however much I regret to arraign their policy, or denounce their principles, I regret still more that this severity is demanded by every consideration of truth and impartiality. I have, nevertheless, avoided, as far as possible, any allusion to individuals, living or dead, and confined myself to a general recital of events. It would be a most instructive task to fill up these outlines, and trace, minutely, the operation of the causes which led to the destruction of the Central America Republic—a task which I may consider it proper to undertake, unless it should be performed by abler hands. But if, in this outline, I shall succeed in showing that the distractions of the Spanish American Republics, are not so much to be ascribed to the insensate passions of their people as to foreign intervention, and the unfavorable conditions which surround them, and that there is, in all of them, and particularly in those of Central America, a large body of devoted, patriotic, and liberal men, who are struggling against the popular

ignorance and superstition, and the machinations and unscrupulous policy of monarchists and oligarchists, at home and abroad, to vindicate the principles of self-government and free institutions, and who deserve, and should receive, the support and encouragement of the American people and Government,—then I shall have the satisfaction of accomplishing the object which I have in view, in presenting this outline, to the exclusion of other matters of perhaps more general interest.

It was my original purpose to have embodied, in the form of a Supplement, an account of that part of Nicaragua which has acquired notoriety under the denomination of the "Mosquito Shore;" as also of its savage inhabitants, the relations of Great Britain with them; the pretensions which she has set up on their behalf, and the aggressions which she has committed upon a weak and unoffending state, under pretext of supporting them. I had also proposed to present a sketch of the political relations of Nicaragua with the United States for the past three years, with a statement of their present condition. But both these subjects involve matters of a personal and controversial character, and might lead to discussions which I do not care to have started in connection with the present work. Should circumstances, or self-vindication require it, they will find their way before the public in another, and probably more appropriate form.

The Maps, Plans, etc, contained in this work, are from my own hand, while the engravings are chiefly from the original drawings of Mr. Jas. McDonough, who accompanied me to Central America in the capacity of artist. They are

faithful copies from nature, in which accuracy has been consulted, rather than artistical effect.

In the chapters on the Aborigines of Nicaragua, I have presented a brief vocabulary, obtained by Mr. Julius Frœbel, in the district of Chontales, which I have named, suggestively, *Chondal*. Since those chapters passed into the hands of the printer, I have obtained information, showing conclusively, that this is the language of the *Woolwa* Indians, who have their seats on the head waters of the Rio Escondido or Blewfields River.

NICARAGUA.

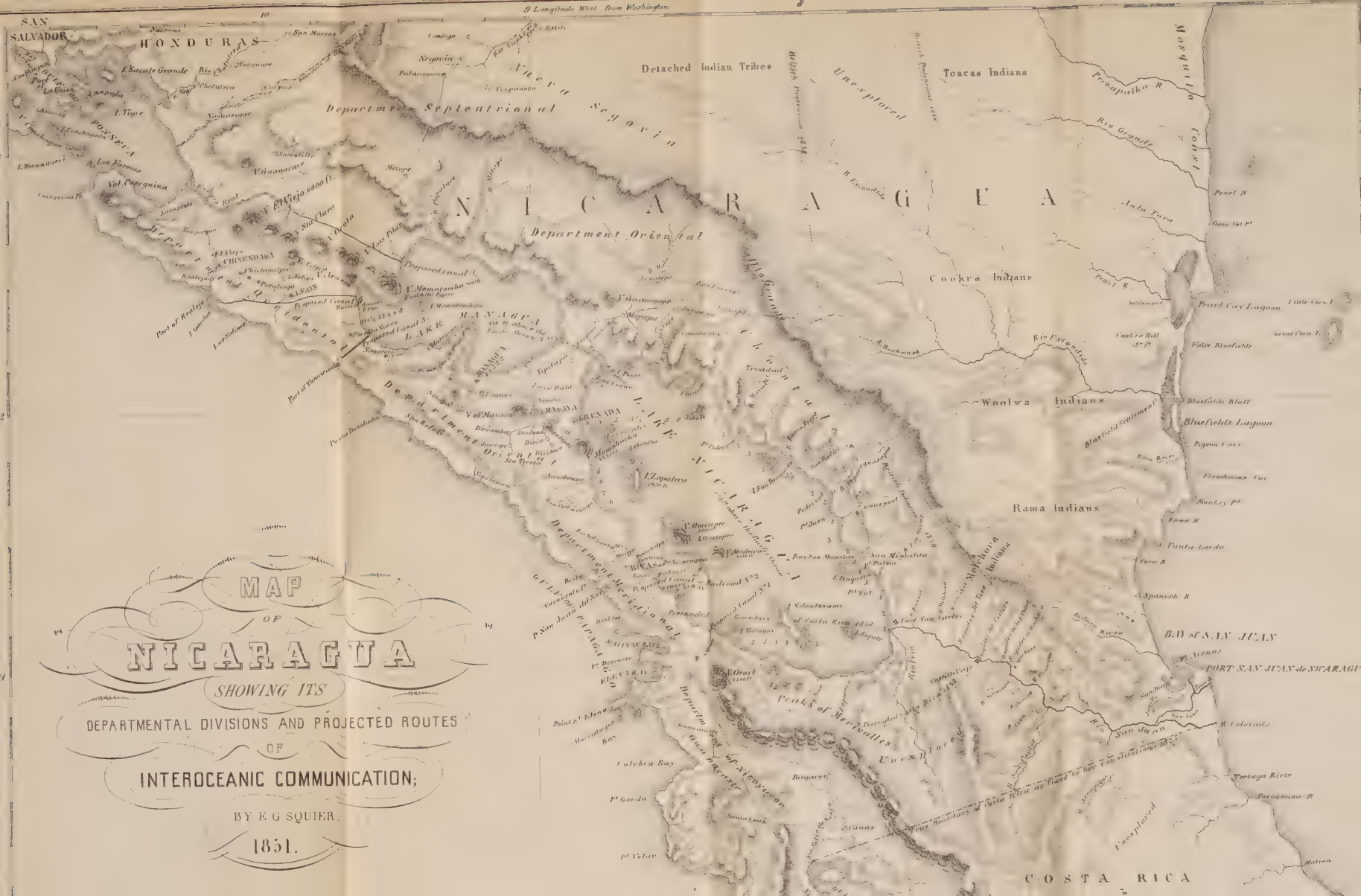
I.—INTRODUCTION; GEOGRAPHY AND TOPOGRAPHY.

II.—PERSONAL NARRATIVE; ANTIQUITIES, ETC.

III.—PROPOSED INTEROCEANIC CANAL

IV.—ABORIGINAL INHABITANTS.

V.—OUTLINE OF POLITICAL HISTORY.


MAP
OF
NICARAGUA
SHOWING ITS
DEPARTMENTAL DIVISIONS AND PROJECTED ROUTES
OF
INTEROCEANIC COMMUNICATION;
BY E G SQUIER.
1851.
NICARAGUA
HONDURAS
COSTA RICA
SAN SALVADOR
Department Septentrional
Department Oriental
Department Occidental
Department Meridional
Detached Indian Tribes
Unexplored
Toacas Indians
Mosquito Coast
Cookra Indians
Woolwa Indians
Rama Indians
Pearl R
Pearl Cay Lagoon
Bluefields Bluff
Bluefields Lagoon
Monkey Pt
Rama R
Punta Gorda
Spanish R
BAY of SAN JUAN
PORT SAN JUAN de NICARAGUA
Fortuna River
Taramuna R
Matina
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INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER I.

CENTRAL AMERICA.—ITS GEOGRAPHY, TOPOGRAPHY, CLIMATE, ETC.

THE conquest of Asia or the acquisition of its commerce has been, from the earliest periods of history to the present hour, the aim of the several generations of men to whom, from their valor or their successful ambition, succeeding ages have accorded the title of heroic. Between the nomadic hordes on the steppes of Tatary, the dwellers in Cashmerian valleys, the daring mountaineers of the Caucasus, the swarthy myriads of Indostan, and the population of that enigmatical Chinese empire (into which the ferocity of the Tatars penetrated further than all the blandishments of civilization), on the one hand, and the more western nations who have laid claim to a higher social order, to more comprehensive faculties of combination, and were possessed of greater greed of rule or aggrandisement, on the other, a perpetual war has existed for more thousands of years, perhaps, than popular belief has allotted to the duration of history. The might of Assyria exhausted itself in the Tatar and Indian conquests of Nimroud and Semiramis. The Achaian republics sought, in the subjugation of the Persian Empire, to assert their sway over the traditional nursery

of mankind. Alexander, son of Ammon, led his armies to the Indus and the very feet of the Himalahs; and not until Rome directed the ambition of the world upon the west of Europe and the shores of Carthage and Egypt, did the tide of conquest ebb from the gorgeous but hapless East. In after times, when the dust of tradition rested on the ruins of the Roman empire, when the fabric of social order and polity, founded upon it, had begun to crack and crumble before the enterprise of schismatic republics and rival empires, the dream of Alexander was revived. The republics of Venice and Genoa struggled in rivalry for the carrying trade in Persian and Indian shawls, and the gems and spices which brighten the earth and sweeten the air from the Caspian to Cape Comorin. And as the sway of empire passed from territory to territory and from race to race over the surface of Europe, to the mightiest amongst them fell ever, by the conquest of her rivals, that unfailing source of wealth and power, "the Eastern Trade."

In fact, the ability of using or abusing the resources of the largest continent of the earth has been, in all modern history, the test of supremacy amongst the nations boastful of civilization. As Venice and Genoa wasted themselves in the strife of faction, Holland and Spain sprang into rivalry on the shores of India. Portugal also mixed in the contest, and fixed her factories and her garrisons on the shores of the southern Asiatic peninsula. The conquest and plunder of the Indian nations seemed the one object of European empires, when the overshadowing power of the papacy had yielded somewhat to Lowland burghers and ambitious France. With the greatness of the latter country, a new rival entered the arena, and the rule of Mazarin, and the overthrow of the feudal noblesse by Louis XIV., found for it an additional field for conquest in Pondicherry and the islands of the Eastern Archipelago. But the designs of Louis le Grand were blasted with his death. France fell into the imbecile hands of his

amorous successor, and the conquests of the French arms in India passed to the more vigorous and not more scrupulous hands of the Islanders, who had beaten down in succession the manufacturing monopolies of Holland, had destroyed the maritime ascendancy of Spain, and won in the New World an undying lustre for their arms.

Then sprang into a great and vigorous existence the maritime power of England. Gibraltar, the Cape of Good Hope, ports of protection from storm and foe, and ports of supply and outfit all the way to the great East,—fell successively into her possession; and the flag, which in the days of Ferdinand and Isabella was cooped up within the limits of England, soon flew in triumph from the fortresses of Calcutta and Madras. The rule of smaller or older rivals vanished from the fated East. To a company of London merchants, greedy of gold and profitable dominion, and never encumbered by scruples of justice or dispositions of mercy, were leased out for plunder and servitude the then almost numberless and unconquered peoples of Hindustan. Gradually, but surely, from the factories on the coast spread out the webs of ambition and avarice. Through intrigues and wars, kingdom after kingdom fell under the control of England; and the work commenced by Clive and Hastings, and continued by Wellington, we see completed in our own day, on the banks of the Sutlej, and at the feet of the mighty Himalahs, by the vengeful victories of a Gough and a Napier. But these conquests were not perfected by England without rivalry. When France, having recovered, by the necessary infliction of a revolution, from the state of unnatural weakness and premature decay to which the vices of monarchy had reduced her, assumed once more the attitude of an empire, defiant, haughty, and strong, the great embodiment of her militant republicanism, Napoleon, flung himself upon the shores of Asia, determined, like Alexander, to carry his standards in triumph from the deserts of

the Bedouin to the mouth of the Ganges. But on the fortress of Acre his magnificent designs were wrecked; and back on Europe, discomfited, and broken into fragments, rolled the remnants of that ambitious army which essayed once again to change the fortunes of the world by arms. With the fall of the Imperial Soldier passed away the terror of invasion from the English empire of the East. But with his fall arose another and even mightier power in the distant North, which, by the same agency of force, when craft shall fail, aims to assume the sway of all mankind.—whose grim flag is now reflected in the waters of the Mediterranean, and is poised with wavering fortunes on the summit of the Caucasus. Between the two great powers of the Old World, England and Russia, a contest now lies for the dominion of the East; a contest which involves, if not the very existence of the first, at least her predominance among nations.

But the destinies of men are not, nor have they ever been, ruled wholly by arms. For three hundred years agencies have been at work, seen in part only in fantasy by the dreamer, unseen in their grand magnificence until our day, which have so far tended to deprive the Old World and all its empires of the sway of Asia, and bestow its commerce and its wealth upon a younger world, a newer empire, and a more equitable policy. We should lose one great lesson of history, if we failed to attribute the future greatness of the United States, even more than its present position, to that ambition of gain and that commercial enterprise which impelled the Spaniards, the Hollanders, and the English, three centuries ago, into a contest of war and adventurous seamanship, the one to retain, the other to acquire possession of the centres of the Oriental trade. Speed and ease of transport, amongst maritime nations, must ever be the conditions of commercial supremacy; and hence was undertaken the search for that "Passage to the East" which had been the day-dream of the enthusiast, and the ambition of rival empires—

that search which led to the discovery of a New World by Columbus, and to the voyages of Cabot and Vespucius, of Raleigh and Verrazzano, from the river of Hudson southward to the Cape of Storms, and northward to the yet impenetrable fields of Arctic ice. But though these adventurous captains failed in their cherished hope of discovering a passage through the American Continent by water, to the descendants of the upright and daring Republicans who sought in a new world an escape from the injustice and perfidy of the old, an overruling but unseen hand has accorded the success denied to other and older nations. That hand has drawn a line of eternal division between the men and the institutions, the tyrannies and superstitions, which crushed mankind from the fall of Rome to the middle of the sixteenth century, and all succeeding history and time. The judgment seems to have been recorded, that they who should dare to bring to this continent the systems or ideas of the old, should themselves share the doom of the savages which they supplanted, and with them pass away for ever. So, though knights of Spain built castles strong and high upon the shores of both great oceans, though Spain transferred all her force and bigotry to the mountains and plains of Central and South America, though colonial empires north and south were established, though the doctrines of absolutism and systems of feudalism struggled over the entire continent for predominance, all have passed away like the dew before the sun; and to the wise and simple Republicans, made up of all nations, equally opposed to superstition and to tyranny, has fallen the dominion of the New World, will fall the control of the Old.

To us is given, in this modern time, the ability, if we choose to exercise it, of acquiring the rule of the East, of placing at defiance alike the menaces and power of England and Russia, and of transferring into our unarmed hands that passage for which Columbus strove in vain, those eastern conquests for which Alexander was deified, that power in

Asia which won an infamous immortality for Clive and Hastings, that vast and incalculable trade upon which is mainly based the maritime power of England, hitherto the mightiest empire among men. The fortune of war has planted our eagles on the Pacific: across the entire continent from ocean to ocean, for twenty-five degrees of latitude, our Republic is supreme. Our trim-built fairies of the deep dance over either ocean, and in conjunction with those giant steamers which push aside the waves along the shores of half the continent, sweep in the trade of Europe on one hand, and on the other bring to the mouth of the Sacramento the treasures of the Oriental world. To gird the world as with a hoop, to pass a current of American Republicanism, vivifying dead nations and emancipating mankind, over the continents of the earth, it needs but that one small spot should be left free from foreign threats and aggression, to exercise for itself its inherent sovereign rights. The key of the continent, destined to unlock the riches of two hemispheres, and which eager nations even now are aiming to snatch, with felon hand, from its rightful possessors, lies between the States of Mexico and the disrupted Republic of Colombia. It is only by preserving its freedom and its territory inviolate, and enabling and encouraging it to open an inter-oceanic highway, that the Republican world can ever hope to reclaim from tyranny and servitude the myriads of Asia, that Americans can ever hope to reach that commercial and national pre-eminence to which their elastic institutions and their individual superiority amongst races of lesser vitality, invites and enables them to aspire.

That small spot of earth—small as compared with the gigantic continent, great in reference to its geographical position and future destiny—is known as Central America.

From the period of The Discovery, in the fifteenth century, when Balboa, crossing its narrowest isthmus at Darien, rushed, buckler and sword in hand, into the waters of the South Sea, and claimed its almost limitless shores for the crown of Castile and Leon, until the present hour, that country has been regarded with a constantly increasing interest; an interest which the requirements of commerce, and the recent acquisitions and newly-developed resources of our own country on the Pacific, have not only augmented but turned to a practical direction. Columbus, not yet comprehending the importance of his own discoveries, coasted along its eastern shores from the Gulf of Honduras to the Bight of Darien, in anxious hope and vain endeavor to find a passage whereby the treasures of the Indies might be poured into the lap of Spain. The same rich prize, augmented in value by the lapse of time and the force of events, is still offered to the enterprise of the world. Asia, with its vast populations and increasing wants, furnishes a market worthy of the competition of nations. New and progressing States have sprung into existence on the Pacific coast of the American continent, which are destined, in the course of time, to attain a pitch of greatness rivalling that of the proudest nations of Europe. The Australian and Polynesian islands, by the double process of colonization and civilization, have already risen into importance, and now enter largely into the commercial and political calculations of the maritime world. A new empire is laying deep its foundations on the coast of New Holland, and it requires no extraordinary prescience to discover that it will soon take rank amongst independent nations. In short, the great tides of civilization, for three centuries moving majestically eastward to India, and westward to the New World, from the European centre, now meet in the waters of the Pacific; they have encircled the earth; and the "short and easy passage to the Indies" which Columbus sought, from a leading desideratum, has became the great necessity

of the age. This alone is wanting to secure for ever American preponderance in the Pacific,—that placid sea where steam navigation is destined to achieve its greatest triumphs, and American enterprise and American Republicanism their most imposing results.

Geographical discovery early demonstrated the fact that to this short and easy "passage to the East," the American continent presents an unbroken barrier, extending from the realms of northern ice to the stormy cape of the south, lashed by the turbulent Antarctic Sea. From that period the daring of man has contemplated the Titanic enterprise of cutting through the continent, and opening an artificial water communication between the two great oceans. Within twenty years after The Discovery, the three routes which by common consent have come to be regarded as the only feasible ones for such communication, had been indicated.[1]

[1] Gomara, one of the earliest writers on America, in common with the best informed men of Spain, judged that the junction of the Atlantic with the Pacific was by no means an impracticable task. A translation of his brief chapter, entitled "The Possibility of a Shorter Passage to the Moluccas," is subjoined. "The voyage from Spain to the Maluccas, (Malay Islands,) by the Straits of Magellan, is so long and hazardous, that having had frequent occasion to discuss the subject with men well acquainted with the Indies, as well as with other persons conversant with history and of an inquiring turn of mind, I have heard of another good though extensive passage, which, if it were made, would be no less honorable than profitable to the maker. The passage would have to be opened across the main land from one sea to the other, by whichever might appear most profitable of these four lines; either by the river Lagartos, which, rising in Chagres, at the distance of four leagues from Panama, over which space of territory they proceed in carts, flows to the sea-coast of Nombre de Dios; or by the channel through which the Lake of Nicaragua empties itself into the sea, up and down which large vessels sail, and the lake is distant only three or four leagues from the sea; by either of these two rivers the passage is already traced and half made. There is likewise another river which flows from Vera Cruz to Tecoantepec, along which the inhabitants of New Spain tow and drag barks from one

All of these are comprehended in what is properly Central America; and that which seems to offer peculiar advantages for this purpose, if indeed it is not the only one which has the merit of practicability, passes through the very centre of this interesting country. Indeed, in respect of geographical position, it almost realizes the ancient idea of the centre of the world. Not only does it connect the two grand divisions of the American continent, the northern and the southern hemispheres, but its ports open to Europe and

sea to the other. The distance from Nombre de Dios to Panama is seventeen leagues, and from the Gulf of Uraba to the Gulf of San Miguel twenty-five, which are the two most difficult lines. There are mountains, it is true, but there are likewise hands; let but the resolve be formed to make the passage, and it can be made. If inclination be not wanting, there will be no want of means: the Indies, to which the passage is to be made, will supply them. To a King of Spain, with the wealth of the Indies at his command, when the object to be attained is the spice trade, that which is possible is, in fact, easy. It appeared an impossibility, and really was one, to unite Brindez to Belona by a causeway over twenty leagues of the sea; yet Pyrrhus and Marcus Varro wished and attempted it, in order to go by land from Italy to Greece. Nicanor began to open a canal of more than a hundred leagues extent by land, without reckoning rivers, for the sake of transporting merchandise from the Caspian to the Pontic or Black Sea; but having been put to death by Ptolemy Ceraunus, his generous and princely design was abandoned. Nitocris, Sesostris, Psammeticus, Darius, Ptolemy, and other kings, projected the junction of the Red Sea with the Nile by means of a canal, in order that perfumes, spices, and medicines might be conveyed straight from the ocean to the Mediterranean; but being apprehensive lest the sea should inundate Egypt by bursting the aqueducts, or an over supply of water, they were deterred from the undertaking; and because the sea might be detrimental to the river, without which Egypt would be nothing. If the passage of which I have been speaking was accomplished, the navigation to the Maluccas would be shortened by one-third of the distance, since ships proceeding thither would always sail by the Canaries under the equator, in a warm latitude, within the dominions of Spain, and without fear of meeting with a foe; nor would our Indies derive less advantage from it, since merchandise would be conveyed to Peru and other provinces in the

Africa on the east, and to Polynesia, Asia, and Australia on the west. Here, too, the continent shrinks to its narrowest limits, and its great mountain barriers subside into low and broken ranges. The adventurous traveller, standing beneath the sky of an eternal summer, with the exuberance of tropical verdure around him, may look down upon the restless Atlantic, the great highway of the commerce of the Old World, on the one hand, and upon the broad Pacific, rolling its unbroken waves over half the globe, on the other. These conditions unerringly point out this country as the theatre of great events, and will give it a prominence in the future

same ships which brought it from Spain, and much expense and trouble be thus saved."—*La Istoria de las Indias*, fol. lviii.

Herrara, Historiographer to the King of Spain, writing of the events of 1527, refers to these routes and the project of inter-oceanic communication, in these words:

"The lake of Nicaragua is remarkable for its extent, the towns and islands in it, for ebbing and flowing, and for that, being three or four leagues from the South Sea, it empties itself into the North Sea. Those who desired to please the Emperor, seeing him intent on finding a way to the Spice Islands, said that since there was no strait in those parts—that is, between the *Gulf of Uraba* and the drain of Nicaragua—a passage might be made by any of four ways which they proposed; the first along the drain of said lake, (the San Juan,) on which large boats go up and down, though there are some dangerous falls, and then making a canal along these four leagues from the lake to the South Sea; and second, along the river de Lagartos, (Chagres,) which rises five or six leagues from Panama, where the way being all plain, as we have said before, a canal might also be cut for the sea and river to meet; the third, by way of Vera Cruz to Tecoantepec, on which, in New Spain, they convey boats from one sea to the other; fourth, the path from Nombre de Dios to Panama, where, they asserted, though there were mountains, it was no difficult matter to make a way. They added, that from the *Gulf of Uraba* to San Miguel, there were only twenty-five leagues; and though it would be a difficult matter, yet nothing was too much for the King of Spain's power, and this would open a much shorter way to the Spice Islands through his own dominions, without any opposition."—*History of America*, vol. iv. p. 14.

history of the world, second to no other equal extent of the earth's surface.

Glancing at the map, we find, at the isthmus of Tehuantepec on the north, the Gulf of Mexico approaching to within two hundred miles of the Western Ocean; the waters of the river Coazacalco, which flows into the former, interlocking with those of the Chicapa, flowing into the latter. This line affords certain facilities of transit which cannot fail to be used by the inhabitants of the great Mississippi Valley, to whom it offers the easiest and speediest mode of communication with the western coast of the continent. They will prove themselves strangely negligent of their present, and blind to their prospective interests, if they do not secure permanently the control of that isthmus. Below this point the continent widens, embracing the high table lands of Guatemala upon the west, and the broad plains of Tobasco, Chiapas, and Yucatan upon the east. The Gulf of Honduras, however, closes around this section upon the south-east, and again narrows the continent to less than two hundred miles. The country intervening between it and the Pacific nevertheless loses its elevated character, and constitutes two great valleys, through which the Motagua finds its way to the Atlantic by the Gulf of Honduras, and the Lempa flows to the Western Ocean. Still lower down, and passing the great transverse basin of Nicaragua, is the well-known narrow isthmus of Panama or Darien, over which the tide of European migration, within a period of three hundred years, has twice poured its floods,—once upon Peru, and once upon the glittering shores of California.

Nor are the topographical features of Central America less remarkable than its geographical. In its physical aspect and configuration, it has very justly been observed, it is an epitome of all other countries and climates of the globe. High mountain ranges, isolated volcanic peaks, elevated table-lands, deep valleys, broad and fertile plains, and exten-

sive alluvions, are here found grouped together, relieved by large and beautiful lakes, and majestic rivers, the whole teeming with animal and vegetable life, and possessing every variety of climate, from torrid heats to the cool and bracing temperature of an eternal spring. The great chain of the Cordilleras here, as in South America, runs close along the Pacific coast, but in places is interrupted, and assumes the form of detached ranges and isolated elevations, of groups or knots of hills, between which the streams from the interior wind their way to either ocean. As a consequence, the principal alluvions border on the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea. Here rains fall in greater or less quantities for the entire year; vegetation is rank, and the climate is damp and proportionably insalubrious. The trade winds blow from the north-east; and the moisture with which they are saturated, condensed on the elevated parts of the continent, flows down towards the Atlantic. The Pacific slope is therefore comparatively dry and healthful, as are also the elevated table-lands of the interior.[1]

Topographically, Central America presents three marked centres of elevation, which have, to a certain extent, fixed its political divisions. The first is the great plain in which is situated the city of Guatemala, and which is nearly six thousand feet above the sea. Here the large rivers, Usumasinta and Tobasco, flowing northward through Chiapa and Tobasco, into the Gulf of Mexico, take their rise,—their sources interlocking with those of the Motagua or Gualan, running eastward into the Gulf of Honduras, and with those of the small streams which send their waters westward into the

[1] "Experience," says Mr. Baily, "shows that the places which are most prejudicial to health in Central America lie on the northern coast and the Mosquito shore, where endemic and intermittent fevers are not unfrequent. The Pacific coast is exposed to a temperature equally high, but is much more salubrious, and seldom visited by epidemic or contagious diseases."

Pacific. Another high plain occupies the centre of Honduras, and extends into the northern part of Nicaragua, from which radiate a hundred streams, north and east into the Caribbean Sea, and south and west into the great lakes of Nicaragua and the Southern Ocean. Among these the most remarkable are the Rio Escondido (called by the English "Blewfields river") the river Vanks, Coco, or Segovia, the Roman, Poyais, and Guyapi, upon the eastern slope; the Lempa, La Paz, Nacaome, and Choluteca, upon the western. Intervening between this and the third great centre of elevation in Costa Rica, is the basin of the Nicaraguan lakes, with its verdant slopes and gently undulating plains. The nucleus of the Costa Rican elevation is the volcano of Cartago, which towers in its midst. Here the Cordilleras resume their general character of a great unbroken mountain barrier, but soon subside again into low ridges on the isthmus of Panama.

These peculiarities of configuration will explain the endless variety of climate to which we have alluded, and which is nowhere more remarkable than in Central America. Situated between 8° and 17° north latitude, were it not for these features, the general temperature would be somewhat hotter than that of the West Indies. As it is, the climate of the coast is nearly the same as that of the islands alluded to, and exceedingly uniform; modified somewhat by the shape and position of the shore, and by the proximity of the mountains, as well as by the prevailing winds. The heat on the Pacific coast is not, however, so oppressive as on the Atlantic; less perhaps because of any considerable difference of temperature, than on account of the greater dryness and purity of the atmosphere.[1]

[1] Dunlap, a very good authority when his personal feelings have no opportunity of being exhibited, has the following correct observations upon the respective climates of the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. "On the south-west (Pacific) coast the rains commence regularly in the beginning

In the northern part of the state of Guatemala, and what is called Los Altos, the Highlands, the average temperature is lower than in any other part of the country. Snow sometimes falls in the vicinity of Quezaltenango, the capital of this department, but disappears immediately, as the thermometer rarely, if ever, falls to the freezing point. In the vicinity of Guatemala, the range of the thermometer is from 55° to 80°, averaging about 72° of Fahrenheit. Vera Paz, lying between Guatemala and Yucatan, is nearly ten degrees warmer, and the coast from Belize around the Gulf of Honduras, embracing the ports of Santo Tomas and Izabal, to Omoa and Truxillo, is still hotter, and very unhealthy. The State of San Salvador lies wholly on the Pacific. It is smaller than any of the other states, and better populated. It is less elevated than either Guatemala or Honduras, and its general temperature is probably higher. The heat, however, is

of May; and, with the exception of a short intermission (in some seasons only) of about twenty days, towards the end of July and the beginning of August, continue till the month of October, and in some parts and seasons till the middle of November. During the rest of the year rain is almost unknown, a slight shower, not sufficient to lay the dust, occurring very rarely. On the north-east (Atlantic) coast the rains, on the contrary, continue nearly all the year, with a short and uncertain intermission of three or four months; the dryest period being from June to October, and the wettest from October to May. As may be supposed, the consequence of this is, that while the interior and south-west coast possesses an almost equal temperature during the whole year, the north-east coast is extremely sultry during the summer months; and is also found to be very unhealthy on account of the superabundant moisture; while the rest of the republic, with some local exceptions, is perhaps more healthy than any other country within the same degrees of latitude."—*Travels in Central America*, (1846), p. 257.

Mr. Baily observes that "the temperature of Central America may be said to be relatively mild, and, taken altogether, undoubtedly salubrious. The degree of absolute heat from the coasts to the interior differs considerably; but only in a few places on the former is it found unfavorable to general health." Mr. Baily estimates the average heat of the interior at 68° Fah., and of the coast at 82° to 84°.

never oppressive, except at a few points on or near the coast, as for instance, Sonsonate, La Union, and San Miguel. The latter place is very closely shut in by mountains, and is not reached by the prevailing winds, to which circumstance its high temperature and proverbial unhealthiness is mainly to be ascribed. Honduras, as its name implies, (plural of *Hondura*, "depth,") has a very diversified surface. The coasts upon both oceans are low; but, as we have already said, the country in the interior is elevated, and there the climate is really delightful; the average temperature at Tegucigalpa and Comayagua, the principal towns, being about 75°. The department of Segovia, in Nicaragua, borders on Honduras, and has a like surface and temperature. The principal part of Nicaragua, however, is different in all respects, and has a topography and climate peculiarly its own. These will form the subject of a separate chapter. It will be sufficient to observe here, that the lakes of Nicaragua form a great inland basin, with broad and undulating slopes, relieved only by steep volcanic cones, and a few ranges of hills along the shores of the Pacific; and that, although the general surface is low, as compared with the other states of Central America, its climate is so favorably modified by a variety of causes as to be rendered not only agreeable, but quite as salubrious as that of any equal extent of country under the tropics. The population of Costa Rica is concentrated on the western or Pacific slope of the great volcano of Cartago; and, as a consequence, any degree of temperature may be obtained, according to the elevation—from intense heat at the port of Punta Arenas to the constant spring of San Jose, or to the autumnal temperature of the belt above the ancient, earthquake-shattered capitol of Cartago. The eastern slopes of Costa Rica may be said to be uninhabited, and the coast from Chiriqui lagoon northward is low and unhealthy. Indeed, the entire Atlantic coast of Central America, embracing the whole of what is called the

Mosquito shore, is subject to the same remark. But yet there are points which are singularly exempt from disease, and where the inhabitants, for a radius of a few miles, enjoy general good health, while beyond these limits the evidences of insalubrity are unmistakable. This coast has, however, scarcely any inhabitants except a few squalid Indians of the Carib stock, of which the Moscos or Mosquitos, in consequence of certain equivocal relations with Great Britain, are the best known. This "nation," as it is called, is a mongrel breed, crossed between negroes and Indians, in every degree of mixture. They are few in number, and have only a factitious importance; for the mass of the Indians, inhabiting what is geographically known as the "Mosquito Shore," neither recognise them as their masters, nor maintain any relations with them.

I have said that the ports of Central America open to Europe and Africa on the one hand, and to Asia and Polynesia and Australia upon the other. No country could be more favorably situated for commerce. Guatemala has upon the east the ports of Belize, (now occupied by the English, in violation of treaty stipulations,) Santo Tomas, and Izabal; Honduras, Cabo Caballo, Omoa, Coxenhole (island of Roatan,) and Truxillo; Nicaragua, Cape Gracias a Dios, Blewfields, and San Juan; Costa Rica, Matina, and Boca del Toro. Upon the Pacific are Golfo Dulce, Punta Arenas, and Caldera, in Costa Rica; the bays of Culebra, Salinas, San Juan del Sur, Tamarinda, and Realejo, in Nicaragua; Amapala and San Lorenzo, in Honduras; La Union, Jiquilisco, Acajutla, Sonsonate, (or La Libertad,) in San Salvador; and Istapa and Ocus, in Guatemala. Sonsonate, Libertad, and Istapa are roadsteads rather than harbors. Acajutla may perhaps be called a roadstead, but the anchorage is partially protected by a long ledge of rocks called "Punta de los Remedios." The landing is therefore comparatively easy, and at low water entirely so. It should also be mentioned that the

Pacific Ocean is much less turbulent than the Atlantic, so that vessels may load and discharge their cargoes with little difficulty, at all these points, for the greater part of the year.

Besides the rivers of Central America, the principal of which have already been enumerated, there are a number of large and beautiful lakes, viz.: Nicaragua and Managua, in Nicaragua; Guija and Ylopango, in San Salvador; Golfo Dulce, Peten, Atitlan, and Amatitan, in Guatemala; and Yojos, in Honduras. Of these, the lakes of Managua and Nicaragua alone are navigable.

The area of Central America may be estimated, in round numbers, at 150,000 square miles,—very nearly equal to that of the New England and Middle States combined, and considerably greater than that of Peru or Chili, which are estimated to contain, the first, 109,000, and the second, 127,000 square miles.

CHAPTER II.

NICARAGUA; ITS EXTENT, TOPOGRAPHY, CLIMATE, POPULATION, PRODUCTIONS, MINERALS, PORTS, ETC., ETC.

THE ancient Kingdom or Captain-Generalcy of Guatemala embraced the principal provinces or intendencies of Guatemala, Honduras, San Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica.[1] These threw off their allegiance to Spain in 1821, and following the great example of the British colonies in North America, assumed the rank of sovereign States. They subsequently united in a confederacy, called the "Republic of Central America," which, in consequence of internal dissensions, and the strife of factions, was practically dissolved in 1839, since which time the several States have asserted and exercised their original sovereign powers, as distinct Republics. Three of the number, namely, Nicaragua, Honduras, and San Salvador, have recently taken steps towards a new

[1] I speak now of the principal provinces. For the convenience of government and administration, other minor divisions were made, which were called provinces, and which had different limits at different periods. The large province, now State of Chiapas, and included in the Mexican Republic, belonged to the ancient Kingdom of Guatemala. Subsequently to the Independence, it was appropriated by Mexico, which country, under the brief rule of Iturbide, attempted to annex to itself the whole of Central America. A portion of what is now the district of Veragua, attached to New Granada, (it is also claimed,) belonged to the old kingdom of Guatemala. The country from north-west to south-east was therefore not much less than four hundred leagues, or twelve hundred miles in length.

confederation, have agreed upon certain bases of union, and have called a constituent assembly.[1]

The Republic of Nicaragua, therefore, comprises the territory which pertained to it as a province. Its boundaries are the Caribbean Sea upon the east, extending from the lower or Colorado mouth of the San Juan River, to Cape Gracias a Dios; and upon the west, the Pacific Ocean from the Gulf of Nicoya to that of Fonseca, embracing about one-third of the latter. The northern boundary, separating it from Honduras, follows the river Vanks, or Segovia, from its mouth at Cape Gracias a Dios, for about two-thirds of its length, thence runs in a right line, northwest by north, to the head of the River Roman, and thence, also in a right line, to the point already indicated on the Gulf of Fonseca. The southern boundary, separating it from Costa Rica, runs in a right line from the mouth of the River Salto de Nicoya, or Alvarado, emptying into the head of the Gulf of Nicoya, to the lower mouth of the San Juan river. The State is therefore embraced entirely between 83° 20′ and 87° 30′, (from Greenwich, 6° 20′, and 10° 30′ from Washington,) west longitude, and between 9° 45′ and 15° of north latitude; and has an area of about 59,000 square miles, or about an equal extent of territory with the New England States, exclusive of Connecticut and Rhode Island.

A claim to upwards of half of this territory has been set up by Great Britain, on behalf of the supposititious "King of the Mosquitos." The boundaries of this claim have been extended from time to time, but, as last defined, embrace the whole coast of Central America, from Cape Honduras to the northern limits of New Granada, as will appear in a subsequent chapter. A claim to another large section of Nicaragua, including the entire department of Guanacaste, or

[1] The history of these events is reserved for the Chapters on the Political State of Central America, near the close of this work.

Nicoya, (lying between Lake Nicaragua and the Gulf of Nicoya,) as also to the entire country south of the lake just named and the River San Juan, has recently been asserted by Costa Rica. But neither the pretensions of Great Britain or Costa Rica are well founded, nor are they admitted by Nicaragua, or recognized by civilized nations. These are points which will be elucidated elsewhere.

As we have already intimated, the geographical and topographical features of Nicaragua are equally remarkable and interesting. If an accurate map of Central America existed, it would exhibit in this State a separation of the great chain of the Cordilleras into two divergent ranges, of less general height than the great ridge itself, and having occasional partial interruptions. This divergence takes place in the northern department of Segovia, one branch extending due southeast towards the Atlantic. Its outposts come down to the very shore, and form prominent landmarks upon that coast. The range itself intersects the San Juan River about fifty miles above its mouth. At its northern base, and nearly parallel to it, flows a large and long stream, the Rio Escondido, sometimes indicated in the maps as "Blewfields River." All the streams upon the southern side of the range fall into Lakes Managua and Nicaragua, or into the San Juan River. This range resumes its course upon the southern shore of the San Juan, but now bears nearly due south, connecting with the Pacific range in the elevated regions of Costa Rica.

The Pacific range follows the general direction of the coast, sometimes rising into lofty volcanic cones, but generally sustaining the character of a high ridge, and in places subsiding into low hills and plains. It preserves a nearly uniform distance from the sea of from ten to twenty miles; consequently there are no considerable streams falling into the Pacific for the distance which it continues. It unites, as I have already said, with the eastern range in Costa Rica. Its course seems to have been the principal line of volcanic action,

and extinct craters and beds of lava are to be met with at short intervals throughout its length. The lofty cones of the Viejo, Santa Clara, Axusco, Momotombo, Momobacho, Ometepec, Madeira, Orosi, and Abogado, not to mention many others which may be regarded as belonging to this range, are prominent landmarks, and form remarkable features in the landscape.[1]

The two ranges of the Cordilleras here referred to form, with their slopes, a great interior basin, not far from three hundred miles long by one hundred and fifty wide, consisting in great part of broad, beautiful, and fertile plains. The waters of this region fall into the lakes already named, of which the San Juan River is the only outlet. Many of the streams flowing into these lakes, especially from the north, are of considerable size, and furnish a supply of water which could not be sensibly affected by drains for artificial purposes.

The lake Managua approaches, at its nearest point, to within four or five leagues of the Pacific, from which it is separated on the south by the range of hills already described: but between its northern extremity and the sea there are only the broad and magnificent plains of Leon and El Conejo, in the midst of which, with all the regularity of the pyramids, rise the volcanoes of Axusco, Telica, and El Viejo.

Lake Managua is a beautiful sheet of water, of much larger size than has hitherto been represented. It is certainly not far from fifty or sixty miles in greatest length by thirty-five

[1] "In proceeding from Realejo southward and westward, there is, at a few leagues distant from the ocean, a range of hills, nowhere of great height until they approach the confines of Costa Rica, where they are elevated into mountains of from 5,000 to 11,000 feet in height. Between this ridge and the lake the land may be termed moderately level, and is not much broken; the contrary is the case along the borders of Honduras, where the country is intersected by several lofty ridges, running in various directions."—*Baily's Central America*, p. 114.

in width, and ranges from two to ten and fifteen, and even forty fathoms in depth. The scenery which borders it is unsurpassed in beauty and grandeur. Upon the northern and eastern shore, lifting their blue rugged peaks one above the other, are the mountains of Matagalpa, merging into those of Segovia, rich in metallic veins. Upon the south and west are broad and fertile slopes and level plains, covered with luxuriant verdure, and of almost unlimited productiveness. The volcano of Momotombo, like a giant warder, stands out boldly into the lake, its bare and blackened summit, which no man has ever reached, covered with a light wreath of smoke, attesting the continued existence of those internal fires which have seamed its steep sides with burning floods, and which still send forth hot and sulphurous springs at its base. Within the lake itself rises the regular cone of Momotombita, so regular that it seems a work of art, covered with a dense forest, under the shadows and within the deep recesses of which, frayed by the storms of ages, stand the rude and frowning statues of the gods of aboriginal superstition, raised there long before European feet trod the soil of America, and to which the mind of the christianized Indian still reverts with a mysterious reverence.

The town or city of Santiago de Managua, which gives its name to the lake, and which is the place of the meeting of the Legislative Chambers of the State, is situated upon the south-western shore. Some considerable streams flow into the lake from the direction of Segovia, and the level of water undergoes very slight changes with the different seasons. The town of Leon was first built on the shore of the north-western extremity of Lake Managua, at a place now called Moabita, but it was subsequently abandoned for the present site, in the midst of the great plain of Leon. From this circumstance the lake in question is sometimes called Lake Leon.

Lake Nicaragua is nevertheless the great feature of the

country, and is unquestionably, in all respects, one of the finest bodies of water on the continent, needing only to be made easy of access to become as famous a resort of the lovers of the grand and beautiful in nature, as any now known in the Old or New World. In common with Lake Managua, its size has been rather under than over-estimated. Mr. Baily calculated its greatest length at one hundred miles, and its greatest width at forty or forty-five miles. It is probably nearer one hundred and twenty miles in length, by fifty or sixty in breadth. Upon its southern shore, near the head of the lake, is the ancient city of Granada, the most important commercial point in the republic. A few miles below Granada, and projecting boldly into the lake, is the extinct volcano of Momobacho, not far from five thousand feet in height. At its base, in the lake, is a group of innumerable small islands of volcanic origin, rising in the form of cones from twenty to one hundred feet, and covered with verdure. Some of them, upon which the soil has accumulated, are inhabited by Indians, and their thatched cottages, shadowed over by tall palms, and with a dense background of broad-leaved plantains, form the most picturesque objects which can be conceived. Upon the same shore with Granada, but forty miles distant, is the city of Nicaragua, or Rivas, the capital of a very large, fertile, and comparatively well-cultivated district. The remaining section of the southern shore of the lake has scarcely any inhabitants, except a few wild Indians, called "Bravos," who alternate between the mountainous district towards Costa Rica and the shore. The northern shore, called Chontales, is undulating, and well adapted to grazing. Here are a great number of cattle estates, some embracing many thousand head of cattle and mules. There are a number of considerable islands in the lake, the largest of which is Madeira or Ometepec, which is almost wholly inhabited by Indians. It abounds in numerous traces of aboriginal occupation and art, and is distin-

guished by two immense cones, visible from every point of the lake and from the Pacific. These are called respectively Ometepec and Madeira. The cone of Ometepec is the most regular in outline of any which I have seen, and is, I think, the highest in the country. Its summit is generally enveloped in clouds. The water of the lake, in most places, shoals gradually, but at some points vessels of the largest class may approach close to the shore. The depth, except in the immediate vicinity of its outlet, is for all purposes of navigation ample, ranging from eight to twenty, and even forty fathoms. The prevailing winds are from the north-east (the direction of the summer trades on the coast,) and when the breeze is considerable, the waves of the lake roll with all the regularity and with much of the majesty of those of the sea. At such times, the surf upon the shore at Granada is nearly as high as it is, during a brisk wind, upon the beach at Newport or Cape May.

The sole outlet to this great interior basin, and of the lakes just described, is the River San Juan, debouching into the Atlantic at the now well-known port of the same name. This river is certainly a magnificent stream, but its capabilities have been greatly exaggerated. It flows from the south-eastern extremity of Lake Nicaragua, nearly due east, to the Atlantic. Its length has been variously estimated, from seventy to one hundred and four miles. The first estimate is obviously too little. Mr. Baily calculated it at ninety miles, and he is probably not far from correct.

The body of water which flows through this stream is at all times considerable, but it varies greatly in amount at different seasons of the year. It is greatest during what is termed the "rainy season" in the interior, that is to say, from May to October, at which period the volume of water is nearly doubled. To this circumstance in some degree may be ascribed the wide difference, in the statements of the depths and capacity of the river, made by different individuals.

Several considerable streams enter the San Juan, the principal of which are the San Carlos and the Serapiqui, both rising towards the south in the highlands of Costa Rica. The streams flowing in from the north are comparatively small, indicating that the mountains are not far distant in this direction, and that upon this side the valley is comparatively narrow. The Serapiqui is ascended by boats to a point where the Costa Rica road (trail) commences. This is the route by which Costa Rica keeps up communication with the San Juan; and to the point here named she is now endeavoring to construct a road for mules, starting from San Jose, her capital. The banks of the San Juan, from the fort of San Carlos, at the outlet of the lake, to the Rapides del Toro, a distance of twenty miles, are generally low, and covered with palms, canes, and a species of high, coarse grass called *gamalote*. The river here sometimes overflows its shores, which for a considerable distance back seem to be flat and swampy. From the port of San Juan upwards to the point of the divergence of the Colorado, a distance of eighteen miles, the banks of the river present a corresponding appearance. In fact, the entire country from this point to the sea is flat, as is shown by the divergence of the Colorado, the Juanillo, and Tauro, and by the occurrence of numerous *lagunas*. It is nevertheless fertile, and capable of producing in the utmost luxuriance rice, sugar, and those other articles which require moist and fertile soils. From the Colorado to the Rapides del Toro, a distance of more than fifty miles, the banks of the river vary from six to twenty feet in height, and are densely wooded; the forests coming down to the water's edge, forming an almost impenetrable wall of verdure. The passenger in the boats is so completely shut in by vegetation, that it is impossible to discover what is the character of the back country. At intervals hills and high grounds are to be discerned, and sometimes these come down to the edge of the river. At the mouth of the San Carlos there are

hills two thousand feet high, and the river is much contracted. The entrance of the passage between them, from the west, somewhat resembles the opening of the highlands of the Hudson from the north.

The banks of the river are in some places rocky; elsewhere they are far from being as crumbling as those of the Ohio and Mississippi, and other rivers of the Western States of the Union. This is perhaps due, to some extent, to the roots of trees and plants which penetrate and bind the earth in all directions. The bed of the river may be regarded as essentially permanent; it nevertheless abounds in islands, of which there are hundreds. Some of these are low, and covered with *gamalote*, or with canes; but most are as high as the banks of the river, and wooded in like manner.

The width of the river varies from one hundred to four hundred yards, and its depth from two to twenty feet. The average volume of water I should estimate at about that of the Connecticut River, or the Hudson above the reach of the tides.

In respect of climate, little need be added to the remarks made on that subject in the preceding chapter. Upon the Atlantic declivity it is unquestionably warmer than in the interior, or upon the borders of the Pacific—more humid and more subject to rain. The country too, is low along the coast, with numerous lagoons and inlets, and consequently more infested with annoying insects and more subject to fevers. The climate, however, is more salubrious than would be supposed under the circumstances. This is illustrated by the fact that in the months of March and April, 1849, a party of American emigrants, one hundred and thirty in number, spent upward of six months at this point; and notwithstanding the sudden transition from midwinter to tropical heats, not to mention inadequate shelter and indifferent food, not one was seriously affected by illness. The same party, it may also be mentioned, passed up the San Juan under the

worst of circumstances, suffering great exposures, and remained in the interior and upon the northern coast until the middle of August, with scarcely any sickness among them, and that little generally the result of carelessness or excesses.

The valley of the San Juan once passed, the climate is unsurpassed in salubrity by any equal extent of territory under the tropics, or perhaps in the world. The year is divided, rather anomalously to the stranger, into two seasons—the wet and the dry—the first of which is called Winter and the latter Summer. The wet season commences in May and lasts until November; during which time, but usually near the commencement or close, rains of some days' duration are of occasional occurrence, and showers are common, but do not often happen except late in the afternoon, (commencing about four o'clock,) or in the night. They are seldom of long continuance; and often days and weeks elapse without a cloud obscuring the sky. From this it will be seen, that the popular idea concerning the "rainy season" is erroneous. Probably but little more than one half the amount of rain which falls in the latitude of New York during the same period falls, during these six months, in Nicaragua. Throughout this season the verdure and the crops, which, during the dry season, become sere and withered, appear in full luxuriance; the temperature is very equable, differing a little in different localities, but preserving great uniformity all over the country, except in the mountainous regions. The range of the thermometer is from 78° to 88°, in rare instances sinking to 70° during the night, and rising to 90° in the afternoon. During the month of June, at Granada, the average height of the thermometer was 82° of Fah.; in Leon, during the months of July, August, and September, 83°. Out of the sun, this weather would prove agreeable to most persons. There is almost constantly a cool and pleasant breeze blowing, for the most part from the north-east. The nights are delicious, and sleep is seldom, if ever, interrupted by heat.

For weeks together the thermometer marked 77° at ten o'clock in the evening, and 76° at sunrise. During the dry season, in January, the temperature is less, the nights positively cool, and occasionally the winds are chilling. The sky is cloudless, and trifling showers fall at rare intervals. The fields become dry, cattle are driven to the hills and forests for pasturage, and the dust in the towns becomes almost insupportable. It penetrates everywhere, permeating even through the tiled roofs in showers, and sweeping in clouds through the unglazed windows. Were it not for this, the dry season would not be pronounced unpleasant. It is esteemed healthier than the wet season.

The effect of the dry season is practically that of our winter, and it no doubt contributes efficiently to the general health of the country. During that period the exuberance of vegetable growth is checked, and the ephemeral vegetation, which, where the rain falls for the entire year, goes on accumulating, forming dense, dank jungles, the home and birthplace of malaria, is entirely dried up. At this period, also, nearly the whole country is burned over. The consequence is, that the forests, for a great part of the year, are nearly as open and penetrable as our own. The favorable influences of these conditions upon the general health can readily be understood.[1]

[1] "The climate of all the state may be said to be good and healthy, but is distinguished, as is that of the other states, by much variety. In the interior, or mountainous parts, the temperature is mild, as compared with the most populous portion of the territory adjacent to the sea-coast, where it is hot, and rather humid, owing to evaporation from the surfaces of two great lakes; which, from the combined effects of a powerful sun, and a fresh breeze from the north-east, blowing over them almost constantly, must be great. Both climate and temperature appear to be extremely favorable to the general health of natives as well as well as foreigners; the exceptions in this important point being very few, and of trifling consequence in the injury which they occasion. The changes of season take place with the same almost undeviating regularity as in other parts of

Nicaragua is divided into six Departments, each of which has several Judicial Districts, as follows:

DEPARTMENTS,	POPULATION.	DISTRICTS.
1. Meridional	20,000	Rivas or Nicaragua.
2. Oriental	95,000	Acoyapa or Chontales, Granada, Masaya, and Managua.
3. Occidental	90,000	Leon and Chinandega
4. Septentrional of Matagalpa	40,000	Matagalpa.
5. Septentrional of Segovia .	12,000	Segovia.
6. Nicoya or Guanacaste . .	7,000	Guanacaste.
Total	264,000	

The population here given is the result arrived at, in round numbers, by a census attempted in 1846. It was only partially successful, as the people supposed it preliminary to some military conscription, or new tax.

The principal towns of the State, with their estimated population, are as follows:—

Leon, (the capital,) including Subtiaba	30,000	Pueblo Nuevo	2,900
Chinandega	11,000	Nagarote	1,800
Chinandega Viejo	3,000	Souci	2,500
Realejo	1,000	Managua	12,000
Chichigalpa	2,800	Masaya	15,090
Posultega	900	Granada	10,000
Telica	1,000	Nicaragua	8,000
Somotillo	2,000	Segovia	8,000
Villa Nueva	1,000	Matagalpa.	2,000
		Acoyapa, ...	500

It is a singular fact that the females greatly exceed the males in number. In the Department Occidental, according to the census, the proportions are as three to two. It is difficult to account for this disparity, except by supposing it

Central America; but the rains often continue a month longer here, and the quantity during the season appears to be considerably more copious; also casual showers, out of the periodical limit, are not unfrequent between the lakes, and the lakes and the sea, affording much benefit to vegetation on the cultivated lands."—Baily.

to be the result of the civil commotions to which the country has been so long subjected.

The civilized Indians of Nicaragua, and those of Spanish and negro stocks crossed with them, constitute the mass of the population. The white individuals of pure European stock are but a small part of the whole, and are nearly equalled in number by those of pure negro blood. The entire population may be divided as follows:

Whites,	25,000
Negroes,	15,000
Indians,	80,000
Mixed,	130,000
Total,	250,000

Most of these live in towns, many of them going two, four, and six miles daily, to labor in the fields, starting before day and returning at night. The plantations, "haciendas," "hattos," "huertas," "ranchos," and "chacras," are scattered pretty equally over the country, and are often reached by paths so obscure as almost wholly to escape the notice of travellers, who, passing through what appears to be a continuous forest from one town to the other, are liable to fall into the error of supposing the country almost wholly uninhabited. Their dwellings are usually of canes, thatched with palm, many of them open at the sides, and with no other floor than the bare earth. These fragile structures, so equable and mild is the climate, are adequate to such protection as the natives are accustomed to consider necessary. Some of them are more pretending, and have the canes plastered over and whitewashed, with tiled roofs and other improvements; and there are a few, belonging to large proprietors, which are exceedingly neat and comfortable, approaching nearer our ideas of habitations for human beings.

A large part of the dwellings in the towns are much of the same character; the residences of the better classes, however, are built of adobes, are of one story, and enclose large courts,

which are entered under archways, often constructed with great beauty. The court-yard has generally a great number of shade trees, usually orange, making the corridors, upon which all the rooms open, exceedingly pleasant.

I have already said that the natural resources of Nicaragua are immense, but they have been very imperfectly developed. The portion of lands brought under cultivation is very small, but ample for the support of its population. There is no difficulty in increasing the amount to an indefinite extent, for the forests are easily removed, and genial nature needs no forcing to return rich harvests. There are many cattle estates, particularly in Chontales, Matagalpa, and Segovia, which cover wide tracts of country; some of these have not less than 10,000 or 15,000 head of cattle each. The cattle are generally fine, quite equal to those of the United States.

Among the staples of the State, and which are produced in great perfection, I may mention sugar, cotton, coffee, indigo, tobacco, rice, and maize, or Indian corn.

Sugar.—The description of sugar-cane grown in Nicaragua is a native of the country, and very different from the Asiatic cane cultivated in the West Indies and the United States. It is said to be equally productive with the foreign species; the canes are softer and more slender, and contain more and stronger juice, in proportion to their size, than the Asiatic variety. Two crops (under favorable circumstances three crops) are taken annually, and the cane does not require replanting but once in twelve or fourteen years. The best kind of sugar produced from the sugar estates is nearly as white as the refined sugar of commerce, the crystals being large and hard. The greater part of the supply for ordinary consumption is what is called "*chancaca*," and is the juice of the cane merely boiled till it crystallizes, without being cleared of the molasses. A quantity of this is exported to Peru, and elsewhere in South America. It is stated that the "chancaca" may be produced, ready for sale, at $1 25 per

quintal (101½ lbs. English.) The most profitable part of the sugar establishment is the manufacture of "*aguardiente*," a species of rum. It is impossible to say, in the absence of data, what amount of sugar is manufactured in Nicaragua; it is perhaps enough to know that it may be produced indefinitely. The export has been estimated at 200,000 lbs.

Cotton.—Cotton of a superior quality to that of Brazil may be produced in any quantity in Nicaragua. "As many as 50,000 bales, of 300 pounds each," says Dunlap, "of clean pressed cotton have been exported from this State in a single year; the cultivation is, however, at present (1846) at a very low ebb." Considerable quantities are nevertheless raised, which are manufactured by the natives, but chiefly by the Indians, into hammocks, sail-cloth, and ordinary clothing. The domestic cloth is coarse, but compact, neat, and durable.

Mr. Baily observes of the cotton of Nicaragua, "that it has already a high standard in the Manchester market, and offers a splendid speculation to agriculturists, if a good port of export on the Atlantic shall be established."

Coffee.—Coffee of an excellent quality, and probably equal to any in the world, may also be produced indefinitely in this republic; but for the reason that hitherto it has been exceedingly difficult to get it to a market, it is not very extensively cultivated. The plantations which I have seen are very flourishing, and the proprietors find them quite as profitable as any other. The limited cultivation is perhaps due to the circumstance that chocolate is the common beverage of the people; and coffee, never having become an article of trade or export, has consequently been neglected. There is no reason why as good coffee may not be produced here as in Costa Rica; and the Costa Rican coffee, when offered in good condition in England, commands as high a price as any other. As, however, it is usually shipped by way of Cape Horn, it often suffers from the protracted voyage. It has, nevertheless, been the almost exclusive source of wealth

in Costa Rica. The crop of 1847 amounted to 8,000,000 pounds, which, at $12 50 per cwt., (the average price in the English market,) gives $1,000,000 as the return—a considerable sum for a State of less than 100,000 inhabitants, and where the culture has been introduced but fourteen years. The cost of production, per quintal (101½ pounds,) at the present rate of wages, (twenty-five cents per day) is about $2 50. If the attention of the people of Nicaragua should be seriously directed to the production of coffee, it would prove a source of great profit.

Cacao.—Cacao, only equalled by that of Soconosco, on the coast of Guatemala, (and which was once monopolized for the use of the royal establishment of Spain,) is cultivated in considerable quantities. It is, however, an article of general consumption among the inhabitants; and consequently, commands so high a price that it would not bear exportation, even though it could be obtained in requisite quantities. About all that finds its way abroad goes in the form of presents from one friend to the other. There is no reason why this should not become an article of large trade, and a source of great wealth. The obvious cause why its production is not greater, is, the length of time and great outlay required in getting a cacao plantation into paying operation. Few have now the requisite capital; and these few are in too feverish a state, in consequence of the distracted condition of public affairs, to venture upon any investment. Under a stable condition of things, and by the opening of a short and easy channel to market, the cultivation of cacao will rise to be of the first importance. The trees give two principal crops in the year. It is sold from $15 to $20 the quintal, while the Guayaquil is worth but $5 or $6.

Indigo.—Indigo was formerly cultivated to a considerable extent, but has of late years much fallen off; and there are a number of fine indigo estates in various parts of the republic

which have been quite given up, with all their appurtenances, by their respective proprietors. The plant cultivated for the manufacture of Indigo is the *indigofera*, a triennial plant, supposed to be a native of America. There is also an indigenous triennial plant abounding in many parts of Central America, which produces indigo of a very excellent quality, but gives less than half the weight which is produced by the cultivated species. The indigo of Nicaragua is of very superior quality, and its export once came up to 5,000 bales of 150 lbs. each. It is impossible to say what the export is at present; probably not more than 1,000 or 2,000 bales. Under the government of Spain, the State of San Salvador produced from 8,000 to 10,000 bales annually. A piece of ground equal to two acres generally produces about 100 to 120 pounds, at a cost of not far from $30 to $40, including the cost of clearing the field and all other expenses.

Tobacco.—A large amount of tobacco is used in Nicaragua, all of which is produced in the country. A considerable quantity was this year (1849) shipped to California. It may be cultivated to any desirable extent, and is of a very superior quality. That of San Salvador and Honduras is said to be equal to the best Havana for cigars.

Maize flourishes luxuriantly, and three crops may be raised on the same ground annually. It is essentially the "staff of life" in all Central America, being the material of which the eternal *tortilla* is composed. The green stalks, "sacate," constitute about the only fodder for horses and cattle in the country, and is supplied daily in all the principal towns. The abundance of this grain may be inferred from the fact that a *fanega of Leon* (equivalent to about five bushels of English) of shelled corn, in 1849, commanded in the capital but one dollar.

Wheat and all other cereal grains, as well as the fruits of temperate climates, flourish in the elevated districts of Sego-

via, in the northern part of the republic, bordering upon Honduras, where, it is said, except in the absence of snow, little difference is to be observed, in respect to climate, from the southern parts of the United States.

Rice is abundant in Nicaragua, and is extensively used, and, like maize, may be easily cultivated to any extent desirable. It is sold at from $1 50 to $2 per cwt.

In short, nearly all the edibles and fruits of the tropics are produced naturally, or may be cultivated in great perfection. Plantains, bananas, beans, chile, tomatoes, bread-fruit, arrow-root, ocra, citrons, oranges, limes, lemons, pine-apples (the delicious white Guayaquil, as well as the yellow variety), mamays, anonas or chirimoyas, guavas, cocoa-nuts, and a hundred other varieties of plants and fruits. Among the vegetable productions of commerce may be mentioned sarsa-parilla, anota, aloes, ipecacuanha, ginger, vanilla, Peruvian bark (quinine), cowhage, copal, gum arabic, copaiva, caoutchouc, dragon's blood, and vanglo, or oil plant. Among the valuable trees: mahogany, log-wood, Brazil-wood, lignum-vitæ, fustic, yellow sanders, pine (on the heights), dragon's blood tree, silk-cotton tree, oak, copal tree, cedar, button-wood, iron-wood, rose-wood, Nicaragua wood, calabash, etc., etc. Of these, Brazil wood, cedar, and mahogany are found in the forests in what may be termed inexhaustible quantities. The cedar is a large tree, like the red cedar of the North in nothing except color and durability, and in solidity and other respects closely resembling the black walnut. Five or six cargoes of Brazil wood are exported from Realejo yearly, and something more from San Juan. A quantity of cedar plank is also exported to South America.

The raising of cattle and the production of cheese is a most important item in the actual resources of Nicaragua. The cheese is for common consumption, and great quantities are used. Large droves of cattle are annually sent to the other

States, where they command very fair prices. About thirty-five or forty thousand hides are also exported annually.

The mineral resources of Nicaragua are also very great. Gold, silver, copper, lead, and iron, may be found in considerable quantities in various parts, but more particularly in Segovia, which district is probably not exceeded in its mineral wealth by any equal portion of the continent. The working of the mines has of course vastly fallen off from the time of the Spaniards; still, their produce is considerable, but it is impossible to obtain any satisfactory statistics concerning it. A portion of the gold and silver finds its way through Izabal to the Balize; other portions pass on through the ports of Truxillo and Omoa, in Honduras; and another but smaller part reaches the ports of Nicaragua.

There is now no mint in Central America, excepting a small one in Costa Rica, which coins from $50,000 to $100,000 annually, principally in dollar pieces of gold. These are short of weight, and are not generally current. Their true value is ninety-three cents. Humboldt, in his statement of the produce of the respective mining districts of America, has put against that of Guatemala, "nothing;" but it is certain from the accounts of Gage and others, as also of the buccaneers, who made a number of profitable expeditions to the mining districts, that the precious metals were early produced in considerable abundance. From a report by the master of the old mint, made in 1825, it appears that, for the fifteen years anterior to 1810, gold and silver had been coined to the amount of $2,193,832, and for the fifteen years posterior to that date, to the amount of $3,810,382. This officer remarks, "that it must not be deduced from hence that this is all our mines have produced in this period, as great quantities of the metal have been manufactured and exported in their native state." He estimates the actual products of the mines at ten times the amount coined; which would give upwards of $50,000,000 for the thirty years pre-

ceding 1825. This estimate will probably bear some deduction.[1]

Other minerals are abundant. Sulphur may be obtained

[1] Dunlap, who paid considerable attention to the mines and minerals of Central America, observes:

"Though the vegetable productions of Central America are so valuable, the hidden treasures are scarcely of inferior worth; and in no part of the world are mines so generally found in nearly every district. Many of these were successfully worked after the conquest and during the Spanish dominion. Besides the mines of gold and silver, there are others containing lead in nearly a pure state; the ore yielding 90 per cent. of metal. In some specimens 25 per cent. of silver is said to be mixed with the lead.

"At the village of Patapa, nine leagues from Santa Ana, in the State of San Salvador, are some rich mines of iron, which produce a purer and more malleable metal than any imported from Europe: the ore is close to the surface, and very abundant, and there are extensive forests in the immediate vicinity, which serve for making charcoal. But, notwithstanding, the amount of iron manufactured is only equal to the supply of the State, where it is worth $10 the 100 lbs., or $200 per ton. In the same neighborhood are several silver mines, which were successfully worked in the time of the Spaniards, but are now abandoned for want of capital to carry them on.

"Five leagues north of San Miguel are a number of mines, principally of silver; among them was one called La Carolina, worked by a Spaniard about thirty years ago. He invested his own property, borrowed $100,000, and, after getting the mine in working order, in less than six months was enabled to pay his obligations; and, although he died before the end of the year, left $70,000 in gold and silver, the produce of the mine. After his death, the ownership was disputed, the works fell into ruins, and the mine became filled with water, in which condition it remains. The mines of Tabanco were more celebrated than those in this vicinity, and when worked yielded upward of $1,000,000 annually, although worked in a rude manner, without machinery. The principal of these once yielded $200,000 annual profit to the proprietors.

"Near the town of Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras, there are a number of mines which still produce a considerable amount of the precious metals, although not one-tenth of what they formerly yielded. All the hills in the neighborhood abound in gold and silver, generally intermixed; and though none of them have been excavated to any depth, or worked

in great quantities, crude and nearly pure, from the volcanoes; and nitre is easily procured, as also sulphate of iron.

by proper machinery, they have formerly yielded more than $2,000,000 per year; and were European capital and science introduced, the produce would be great. From all I have been able to collect, this neighborhood appears to possess natural stores of the precious metals, even exceeding those of the celebrated mines of Potosi, in Bolivia. For a scientific and practical miner, supported by capital, they probably offer the best adventure to be found in Spanish America.

"The ores generally contain from 12 to 15 per cent. of silver, and from one to one and a half per cent. of gold; but the latter metal is often found pure in many places, and the value of some thousands of dollars is annually collected by the Indians in the sands of the rivers, pieces of gold weighing as many as five and six pounds having occasionally been discovered.

"Some rich gold washings exist at Matagalpa, near Segovia, in Nicaragua, which are only worked by the Indians, who annually collect and dispose of a few pounds of very pure gold. Some copper mines have also been discovered here, the ore of which, when shipped to England, yielded 35 per cent. of copper.

"In the district of Nicoya, in the same State, many traces of the precious metals are said to exist, but as the country is almost wholly uninhabited, little is known concerning them.

"In the mountain of Aguacate, in Costa Rica, several profitable gold mines are still worked with fair profits."—*Dunlap's Central America*, 1847, pp. 277, 284.

An English traveller named Byam, who, although destitute of scientific knowledge, seems to have visited Nicaragua for mining purposes, states that the silver mines which he observed "were fine, broad, but rather irregular veins, the ore combined with sulphur and lead. The ore is hard but clean." The copper ores, he informs us, "are almost all uncombined with sulphur, or any other combination which requires calcining to be got rid of. They may all be smelted in a common blast furnace, with the aid of equal quantities of iron-stone, which lies in large quantities on the surface of all the hilly country. They are what the Spanish miners call 'metal de color,' red and blue oxides and green carbonates, with now and then the brown or pigeon-breasted. They cut easily and smoothly with the knife, and yield from twenty-five to sixty per cent. The copper veins are generally vertical, and the larger ones run east and west." This

The modes of mining practised in Central America are exceedingly rude, and render it surprising that profitable

writer has the following references to the gold washings of the country:

"Some adventurers, generally of the very lowest class, both in manners and morals, proceed to the auriferous streams, that run through the south part of the Honduras nearest to Segovia, for two or three months during the dryest part of the year, and when the rains have entirely subsided. Their baggage is very light and easily carried on a donkey or half-starved mule, for they only provide each for himself and his female helpmate a small load of Indian corn, barely enough for the pair, some tobacco, a small stone for grinding the corn, an earthen pan or two, a hatchet, and a small leathern bag to put the gold in *when found*. They also take a few half gourds dried, to wash the earth in, and a grass hammock to sleep in, and away they start, driving their animals before them, each man carrying his machete or short heavy broad sword, and some, bows and arrows. The part of the country is almost uninhabited, and, on their arrival at the different streams, they generally separate, and each pair chooses a spot often miles apart, where they commence operations. The first thing is to build a "Ramada," or hut of branches, as the name signifies; but they always select a place where two good-sized trees are near enough together, to enable them to swing their hammocks between them. With a few poles and branches with the leaf on, a hut is made in two or three hours; the man then makes a pile of dry wood near at hand, and leaves the entire care of the household to the woman, who grinds the corn, and every day makes a few cakes, looking like thin pancakes, which are toasted on a flat earthen pan over the wood ashes. Their drink is a little maize meal and cacao nut ground together, mixed with water and stirred up in a gourd; and thus the pair vegetate for two or three months, supported by the hopes of living well for the remainder of the year. The man is always within sight of the hut, in case assistance be wanted in such a wild spot; and he digs holes into the ground near the stream, and after having piled up a heap of earth close to the water, washes it in the half gourds, when, after repeated changes of water, and the spot chosen having proved a good one, a little fine gold dust is often visible in the gourd. It requires a great deal of nicety to balance the gourd backwards and forwards, up and down, and round about, so as to get rid of the earth; and it is still more difficult, at the last washing, to manage to leave the gold altogether, at the very end of the remaining deposit, which is generally of a black or

results should be attained. The silver and gold ores are crushed in a basin of masonry, in which rises a vertical shaft, driven generally by a horizontal water-wheel. This shaft has two arms, to each of which is suspended a large stone or boulder. These are the crushers. After the ore is reduced to sufficient fineness, the metal is separated by amalgam; a long and expensive process, which is now beginning to be much facilitated and cheapened by the introduction of the German or "barrel process." The machines for crushing the ores have, however, as yet, undergone but slight improvement. Some of the mines in San Salvador and Costa Rica have European machinery, and are worked to great advantage.

The most important silver mines in Nicaragua, at present, are those called Dipilta, in the northern part of the republic. These have been worked only for a short period, and under very disadvantageous circumstances. They have, nevertheless, during the last three years, produced upwards of 26,000 marks (17,300 lbs.) of silver. The average yield of the ores is something over one and a half per cent. The better qualities of ore produce nearly two per cent. of pure metal.

Nicaragua has a number of excellent ports, the best known of which are San Juan, on the Atlantic, and Realejo, on the Pacific. These will be specially noticed in another connection. It may, nevertheless, be observed that they are adequate to all the wants of commerce, and are not surpassed in natural advantages by any of the American ports under the tropics. No returns of their commerce have been made public for many years; and there are, in consequence, no

dark gray color. The grains of gold are often large enough to be picked out after one or two washings, and often of a size to be discerned whilst digging, and a man in good luck may find enough gold in a week to keep him comfortably the whole year; but money easily got generally soon goes; and on the return of the lucky pair to their town, it is too often quickly spent in gambling and low debauchery."

means of determining what has been the trade of the country. This information, however, is now of little importance: for recent events have opened entirely new markets,[1] and new

[1] In a report made to the British government in 1837, by Mr. Foster, British Vice-Consul, and one of the principal traders of the country, the character of the imports and exports of the country are exhibited as follows:

"The prices of foreign manufactures have now found their level in these markets, and the consumption of those articles used by the poorer classes has increased in a wonderful degree both in quantity and quality; and the demand for foreign manufactures (of which British cottons of inferior quality have a prominent part) will naturally go on at an increased rate.

"The foreign imports may be classed under the following heads:

"British—consist of calicoes, printed cottons, (domestic or gray,) and power-loom shirtings, linen and cotton mixed, or unions, linens, muslins, hosiery, hard earthenware, iron, steel, lead, powder, etc., etc.

"French—consist of silks, printed cottons, cambries, wine, spirits, jewelry, and fancy articles.

"United States—consist of domestic cottons, soap, sperm candles, hardware, spirits of inferior quality, and powder.

"Spanish—consist of paper, silk, riband, wine, oil, spirits, etc.

"Germany—consist of osnaburgs, glassware, wax, furniture, hardware, steel, wine, etc.

"Italy—consist of paper, oil, silk, and liquors.

"Colombia—consist of cacao and straw hats.

"Peru—consist of xerga, (a coarse woollen cloth,) tin, spirits, and common sweet wine.

"Chile—consist of sweet wine and pelones.

"The value of British goods imported may be taken at two-thirds of the whole of the imports.

"The consumption of French goods, being principally articles of luxury, is chiefly confined to the cities of Guatemala, San Salvador, Leon, Granada, etc. German linens, shirtings, and glassware are articles of general consumption. In Spanish goods, with the exception of ribands, the imports are trivial. They have given way to those of France and Italy.

"The sickness of this year has had considerable influence on the exports. Cochineal and indigo form the principal; great quantities, particularly of the former, are shipped from the ports on the northern side of Honduras.

avenues of trade, and the past can be no criterion for the future in estimating the present and future commercial importance of the country.

From the ports of the Pacific, 1,500 ceroons have been exported during the year to Europe, and the ports of Peru and Chile. Hides, horns, sarsaparilla, and balsam, for Europe and the United Sates, and mahogany, cedar, and sugar, for Chile and Peru. Those form the principal articles of the export trade, which, in proportion to the imports, is on the increase. Brazil wood, with which this State as well as Costa Rica abounds, formerly afforded employment to a great number of British vessels. The fall of this article in the home markets has for the present caused it to be but little sought for.

"In agriculture, this State is rapidly improving. In addition to indigo, sugar, cacao, wheat, etc., etc., coffee and cotton are now better attended to, but more particularly cotton and indigo. The former, which is much esteemed and known in the European market as 'green suche,' is an annual plant. The staple is short, which defect is overbalanced by its superior texture; and it is particularly adapted to certain manufactures."

NARRATIVE.

NARRATIVE.

CHAPTER I.

THE BRIG FRANCIS—DEPARTURE FROM NEW YORK—SAN DOMINGO—THE COAST OF CENTRAL AMERICA—MONKEY POINT—SHREWD SPECULATIONS—A NAKED PILOT—ALMOST A SHIPWRECK—SAN JUAN DE NICARAGUA—MUSIC OF THE CHAIN CABLE—A POMPOUS OFFICIAL—DELIVERING A LETTER OF INTRODUCTION—TERRA FIRMA AGAIN—"NAGUAS" AND "GUIPILS"—THE TOWN AND ITS LAGUNA—SNAKES AND ALLIGATORS—PRACTICAL EQUALITY—CELT *vs.* NEGRO—A WAN POLICEMAN—THE BRITISH CONSUL GENERAL FOR MOSQUITIA—"OUR HOUSE" IN SAN JUAN—AN EMEUTE—PIGS AND POLICE—A VISCOMTE ON THE STUMP—A SERENADE—MOSQUITO INDIANS—A PICTURE OF PRIMITIVE SIMPLICITY.

THE preceding general observations will serve to give an outline view of Central America and Nicaragua, and prepare the way for more detailed accounts of the country and its inhabitants. In attempting to give these, I shall refer to localities as they fell under my notice in entering and passing through the country, and record incidents very nearly in the order in which they occurred.

The point in Nicaragua most accessible from the United States, and that to which the traveller would most naturally take his course, is the now well-known port of San Juan de Nicaragua, situated upon the shores of the Caribbean Sea, about three hundred miles to the north-west of Chagres. The little brig Francis, of New York, was "up" for this port in the

early part of May, in the year of grace 1849; and, for satisfactory reasons, overruling all choice in the premises, berths were engaged in her for myself and companions. She lay at the foot of Roosevelt street, in the *terra incognita* beyond the Bowery,—a pigmy amongst the larger vessels which surrounded her. We reported ourselves on board, in compliance with the special request of the owners, at 9 o'clock on the morning of the 11th, just as the human tide ebbed from the high-water mark of Fourth street and Union Square, and subsided for the day amongst the rugged banks and dangerous shallows of Wall and Pearl streets.

The Francis had received her freight, and her decks were encumbered with pigs and poultry, spars and tarpaulins, to say nothing of water casks and tar barrels, forbidding in advance any peregrinations, by unsteady landsmen, beyond the quarter deck. The quarter deck was so called by courtesy only: it was elevated but a few inches above the waist, and, deducting the room occupied by hen-coops, water-casks, and the man at the helm, afforded but about ten square feet of space, in which the unfortunate passengers might "recreate" themselves. This might have sufficed for men of moderate desires, but then it was far from being "contiguous territory."

In a word, we found ourselves in the midst of a confusion which none but the experienced traveller can coolly contemplate. Our friends, or rather the more daring of them, scrambled over the intervening decks, or hailed us from the rigging of the neighboring vessels. We would have invited them on board, but there was no room to receive them; besides the descent was perilous. All partings are much alike, but ours were made with a prodigious affectation of good spirits. We were to have sailed precisely at ten; but when eleven was chimed, the number which had come "expressly to see us off," was sensibly diminished; and at twelve we were left to our own contemplations.

There was a prodigious pulling of ropes; the same boxes were tumbled from one place to another and back again; trunks disappeared and came to light, and it seemed as if everybody was engaged in a grand search for nobody knew what. At one o'clock the pilot came on board. The delay had become painful, and now we thought the time for sailing had arrived. But the pilot was a fat man, and sat down imperturbably upon a water-cask. "Well, Mr. Pilot, are we off?" He deigned no audible reply, but glanced upwards significantly towards the streamer at the masthead. The wind blew briskly in from the Narrows. So we seated ourselves upon the water-casks also, and watched the men who were painting the next ship, and almost nodded ourselves to sleep, to the monotonous "yo-ho" of the sailors unloading an Indiaman near by. The roar of Broadway fell subdued and distant upon our ears; and the ferry-boats and little steamers in the river seemed to move about in silence, going to and fro apparently without an object, like ants around an ant-hill.

By-and-by a little, black bull-dog of a steamer thrust itself valiantly through the crowd of vessels, made a rope fast to our bows, and dragged us, with a jerk, triumphantly into the stream, past Governor's Island, down to the outer bay, and then left us to take care of ourselves. That night the sun went down cold and filmy, and the Francis tumbled roughly about amidst the dark waves of the Atlantic. * * * A calm under the high capes of San Domingo,—an infinitude of thunder squalls, with the pleasant consciousness of a hundred kegs of gunpowder stowed snugly around the foot of the mainmast,—a "close shave" on the coral reefs below Jamaica,—for twenty-six mortal days this was all which we had of relief from the detestable monotony of shipboard. Blessed be steam! * * * *

It was a dark and rainy morning, when "Land on the lee-bow," was sung out by the man at the helm, and in less time

than is occupied in writing it, the occupants of the close little cabin made their way on deck, to look for the first time upon the coast of Central America. The dim outlines of the land were just discernible through the murky atmosphere, and many and profound were the conjectures hazarded as to what precise point was then in view. The result finally arrived at was, that we were off "Monkey Point," about thirty miles to the northward of our destined port. This conclusion was soon confirmed by observing, close under the shadow of the shore, an immense rock, rising with all the regularity of the Pyramids to the height of three hundred feet; a landmark too characteristic to be mistaken.

We were sweeping along with a stiff breeze, and were comforted with the assurance that we should be in port to breakfast, "*if*," as the cautious captain observed, "the wind held." But the perverse wind did not hold, and in half an hour thereafter we were rocking about with a wash-tubby motion, the most disagreeable that can be imagined, and of which we had had three days' experience under the Capes of San Domingo. The haze cleared a little, and with our glasses we could make out a long, low line of shore, covered with the densest verdure, with here and there the feathery palm, which forms so picturesque a feature in all tropical scenery, lifting itself proudly above the rest of the forest, and the whole relieved against a background of high hills, over which the gray mist still hung like a veil.

Some of the party could even make out the huts on the shore; but the old man at the helm smiled incredulously, and said there were no huts there, and that the unbroken and untenanted forest extended far back to the great ridge of the Cordilleras. So it was when the adventurous Spaniards coasted here three centuries ago, and so it had remained ever since. These observations were interrupted by a heavy shower, acceptable for the wind it brought, which filled the idle sails, and moved us towards our haven. And though

the rain fell in torrents, it did not deter us from getting soaked, in vain endeavors to harpoon the porpoises that came tumbling in numbers around our bows.

But the shower passed, and with it our breeze, and again the brig rocked lazily on the water, which was now filled with branches of trees, and among the rubbish that drifted past, a broken spear and a cocoa-nut attracted particular attention; the one showed the proximity of a people whose primitive weapons had not yet given place to those more effective, of civilized ingenuity, and the other was a certain index of the tropics. The shower passed, but it had carried us within sight of our port. Those who had previously seen cabins on the shore could not now perceive any evidences of human habitation, and stoutly persisted that we had lost our reckoning, and that we were far from our destined haven. But a trim schooner which was just then seen moving rapidly along under a pouring shower, in the same direction with ourselves, silenced the pretended doubters, and became immediately a subject of great speculation. It was finally agreed on all hands that it must be the B——, a vessel which left New York three days before us, the captain of which had boasted that he would "beat us in, by at least ten days." So everybody was anxious that the little brig should lead him into the harbor, and many were the objurgations upon the wind, and desperate the attempts of the sailors to avail themselves of every "cat's-paw" that passed.

The excitement was great, and some of the impatient passengers inquired for sweeps, and recommended putting out the yawl to tow the vessel in. They even forgot, such was the excitement, to admire the emerald shores which were now distinct, not more than half a mile distant, and prayed that a black-looking thunder-storm, looming gloomily in the east, might make a diversion in our favor. And then a speck was discerned in the direction of the port; and by-and-by the movement of the oars could be seen, and bodies swaying to

and fro, and in due time a *pit-pan*, a long, sharp-pointed canoe, pulled by a motley set of mortals, stripped to the waist, and displaying a great variety of skins, from light yellow to coal black, darted under our bows, and a burly fellow in a shirt pulled off his straw hat to the captain, and inquired in bad English, "Want-ee ah pilot?" The mate consigned him to the nether regions for a lubber, and inquired what had become of his eyes, and if he couldn't tell the Francis anywhere: the Francis, which "had made thirty-seven voyages to this port, and knew the way better than any black son of a gun who ever put to sea in a bread-trough!" And then the black fellow in a shirt and straw hat was again instructed to go below, or if he preferred, to go and "pilot in the lubberly schooner to windward." The black fellow looked blacker than before, and said something in an unintelligible jargon to the rest, and away they darted for the schooner.

Meantime the flank of the thunder storm swept towards us, piling up a black line of water, crested with foam, while it approached with a noise like that of distant thunder. It came upon us; the sails fluttered a moment and filled, the yards creaked, the masts bent to the strain, and the little brig dashed rapidly through the hissing water. In the darkness we lost sight of the schooner, and the shore was no longer visible, but we kept on our way; the Francis knew the road, and seemed full of life, and eager to reach her old anchorage.

"Don't she scud!" said the mate, who rubbed his hands in very glee. "If this only holds for ten minutes more, we're in, like a spike!"—and, strange to say, it did hold; and when it was past we found ourselves close to "Point Arenas," a long narrow spit, partly covered with water, which shuts in the harbor, leaving only a narrow opening for the admission of vessels. The schooner was behind us, but here was a difficulty. The bar had changed since his last trip; the captain was uncertain as to the entrance, and the surf broke heavily under our lee. Excitement of another character pre-

vailed as we moved slowly on, where a great swell proclaimed the existence of shallows. The captain stood in the bow, and we watched the captain. Suddenly he cried, "Hard a-port!" with startling emphasis, and "Hard a-port!" was echoed by the helmsman, as he swept round the tiller. But it was too late; the little vessel struck heavily as the wave fell.

"Thirty-seventh, and last!" muttered the mate between his teeth, as he rushed to the fastenings, and the main-sail came down on the run. "Round with the boom, my men!" and the boom swung round, just as the brig struck again, with greater force than before, unshipping the rudder, and throwing the helmsman across the deck. "Round again, my men! lively, or the Francis is lost!" cheered the mate, who seemed invested with superhuman strength and agility; and as the boom swung round the wave fell, but the Francis did not strike. "Clear she is!" shouted the mate, who leaped upon the companion-way, and waved his hat in triumph; and turning towards the schooner, "Do *that*, ye divil, and call yerself a sailor!" There was no doubt about it; the Francis was in before the schooner; and notwithstanding the accident to her rudder, she passed readily to her old anchoring ground, in the midst of a spacious harbor, smooth as a mill-pond. There was music in the rattling cable as the anchor was run out, and the Francis moved slowly round, with her broadside towards the town. The well was tried, but she had made no water, which was the occasion for a new ebullition of joy on the part of the mate.

All danger past, we had an opportunity to look about us. We were not more than two cable-lengths from a low sandy shore, upon which was ranged, in a line parallel to the water, a double row of houses, or rather huts, some built of boards, but most of reeds, and all thatched with palm-leaves. Some came down to the water, like sheds, and under one end were drawn up pit-pans and canoes. Larger contrivances for navi-

gating the San Juan river, resembling canal-boats, were also moored close in shore, and upon each might be seen a number of very long and very black legs, every pair of which was surmounted by a very short white shirt. In the centre of the line of houses, which was no other than the town of San Juan de Nicaragua, was an open space, and in the middle of this was a building larger than the others, but of like construction, surrounded by a high fence of canes, and near one end rose a stumpy flag-staff, and from its top hung a dingy piece of bunting, closely resembling the British Union Jack: and this was the custom-house of San Juan, the residence of all the British officials; and the flag was that of the "King of the Mosquitos," the "ally of Great Britain!"

But of this mighty potentate, and how the British officials came there, more anon. Just opposite us, on the shore, was an object resembling some black monster which had lost its teeth and eyes, and seemed sorry that it had left its kindred at the Novelty Works. It was the boiler of a steamer, which some adventurous Yankees had proposed putting up here, but which, from some defect, had proved useless. Behind the town rose the dense tropical forest. There were no clearings, no lines of road stretching back into the country; nothing but dense, dark solitudes, where the tapir and the wild boar roamed unmolested; where the painted macaw and the noisy parrot, flying from one giant ceiba to another, alone disturbed the silence; and where the many-hued and numerous serpents of the tropics coiled among the branches of strange trees, loaded with flowers and fragrant with precious gums. The whole scene was unprecedentedly novel and picturesque. There was a strange blending of objects pertaining to the extremes of civilization. The boiler of the steamer was side by side with the graceful canoe, identical with that in which the simple natives of Hispaniola brought fruits to Columbus; and men in stiff European costumes were seen passing among others, whose dark, naked

bodies, protected only at the loins, indicated their descent from the aborigines who had disputed the possession of the soil with the mailed followers of Cordova, and made vain propitiations to the symbolical sun to assist them against their enemies. Here they were, unknowing and careless alike of Cordova or the sun, and ready to load themselves like brutes, in order to earn a sixpence with which to get drunk that night, in concert with the monotonous twanging of a two-stringed guitar!

Our anchor was hardly down before a canoe came alongside, containing as variegated an assortment of passengers as can well be conceived. Among them were the officers of the port, whose importance was made manifest from the numerous and unnecessary orders they gave to the oarsmen, and the prodigious bustle they made in getting up the side. They looked inquiringly at the bright silken flag which one of the party held in his hands, and which looked brighter than ever under the rays of the setting sun. The eagles on the caps of the party were also objects which attracted many inquiring glances; and directly the captain was withdrawn into a corner, and asked the significance of all this. The answer seemed to diminish the importance of the officials materially, and one approached, holding his sombrero reverently in his hand, and said that "Her Britannic Majesty's Consul-General in Mosquitia, Mr. C——, was now resident in the town, and that he should do himself the honor to announce our arrival immediately, and hoped we had had a pleasant voyage, and that we would avail ourselves of his humble services;" to all of which gracious responses were given, together with a drop of brandy, which last did not seem at all unacceptable. I had warm letters of introduction to several of the leading inhabitants of San Juan, and accordingly began to make inquiries as to their whereabouts of a respectable looking negro, who was amongst the visiting party. To my first question, as to whether Mr. S—— S—— was

then in town, the colored gentleman uncovered his head, bowed low, and said the humble individual named was before me. I also uncovered myself, bowed equally low, and assured him I was happy to make his acquaintance, delivering my letter at the same time with all the grace possible under the circumstances.

He glanced over its contents, took off his hat again, and bowed lower than before. Not to be behindhand in politeness, I went through the same performance, which was responded to by a genuflection absolutely beyond my power to undertake, without risk of a dislocation; so I resigned the contest, and gave in "dead beat," much to the entertainment of the Irish mate, who was not deficient in the natural antipathy of his race towards the negro. Ben, my colored servant, next received a welcome not less cordial than my own; and my new acquaintance "was glad to inform me, that fortunately there was a new house under his charge, which was then vacant, and that he was happy in putting it at my disposal." The happiness was worth exactly eight dollars, as I discovered by a bill which was presented to me four days thereafter, as we were on the point of leaving for the interior; and which, considering that the usual rent of houses here is from four to five dollars per month, was probably intended to include pay for the genuflections on shipboard. We were impatient to land, and could not wait for the yawl to be hoisted over the side; so we crowded ourselves into the canoe of the "Harbor Master," and went on shore.

The population of the town was all there, many-hued and fantastically attired. The dress of the urchins from twelve and fourteen downwards, consisted generally of a straw hat and a cigar, the latter sometimes unlighted and stuck behind the ear, but oftener lighted and stuck in the mouth; a costume sufficiently airy and picturesque, and, as B—— observed, "excessively cheap."

Most of the women had a simple white or flowered skirt (*nagua*) fastened above the hips, with a "*guipil*," or sort of large vandyke, with holes, through which the arms were passed, and which hung loosely down over the breast. In some cases the *guipil* was rather short, and exposed a dark strip of skin from one to four inches wide, which the wanton wind often made much broader. It was very clear that false hips and other civilized contrivances had not reached here, and it was equally clear that they were not needed to give fullness to the female figures which we saw around us. All the women had their hair braided in two long locks which hung down behind, and which gave them a school-girly look quite out of keeping with the cool, deliberate manner in which they puffed their cigars, occasionally forcing the smoke in jets from their nostrils. Their feet were innocent of stockings, but the more fashionable ladies wore silk or satin slippers, which (it is hoped our scrutiny was not indelicately close) were quite as likely to be soiled on the inside as the out. A number had gaudy-colored *rebosos* thrown over their heads, and altogether, the entire group, with an advance-guard of wolfish, sullen-looking curs, was strikingly novel, and not a little picturesque. We leaped ashore upon the yielding sand with a delight known only to the voyager who has been penned up for a month in a small, uncomfortable vessel, and without further ceremony passed through the crowd of gazers, and started down the principal avenue, which, as we learned, had been called "King street" since the English usurpation. The doors of the various queer-looking little houses were all open, and in all of them might be seen hammocks suspended between the front and back entrances, so as to catch the passing current of air. In some of these, reclining in attitudes suggestive of most intense laziness, were swarthy figures of men, whose constitutional apathy not even the unwonted occurrence of the arrival, at the same moment, of two ships could disturb. The

women, it is needless to say, were all on the beach, except a few decrepit old dames, who gazed at us from the door-ways. Passing through the town, we entered the forest, followed by a train of boys and some ill-looking, grown-up vagabonds. The path led to a beautiful lagoon, fenced in by a bank of verdure, upon the edges of which were a number of women, naked to the waist, who had not yet heard the news: they were washing, an operation quite different from that of our own country, and which consisted in dipping the clothes in the water, placing them on the bottom of an old canoe, and beating them violently with clubs. Visions of buttonless shirts rose up incontinently in long perspective, as we turned down a narrow path which led along the shores of the lagoon, and invited us to the cool, deep shades of the forest. A flock of noisy paroquets were fluttering above us, and strange fruits and flowers appeared on all sides. We had not gone far before there was an odor of musk, and directly a plunge in the water. We stopped short, but one of the urchins waved his hand contemptuously, and said "Lagartos!" And sure enough, glancing through the bushes, we saw two or three monstrous alligators slowly propelling themselves through the water. "Devils in an earthly paradise!" muttered B——, who dropped into the rear. The urchins noticed our surprise, and by way of comfort, a little naked rascal in advance observed, looking suspiciously around at the same time, "*Muchas culebras aqui.*" — "Many snakes here!" This interesting piece of intelligence opened conversation, and we were not long in ascertaining that but a few days previously, two men had been bitten by snakes, and had died in frightful torments. It was soon concluded that we had gone far enough, and that we had better defer our walk in the woods to another day. It is scarcely necessary to observe, that it was never resumed.

Returning, we met my colored friend, who informed me that there was a quantity of hides stored in the house selected

for my accommodation, but that he would have them removed that evening, and the house ready for our reception in the morning. Regarding ourselves as guests, whom it became to assent to whatever suggestion our host might make, we answered him that the arrangement was perfectly satisfactory, that we could sleep that night comfortably on board the vessel—a terrible fib, by the way, for we knew better—and that he might take his time in making such provision for us as he thought proper. We then sauntered through the town, looking into the door-ways, catching occasional glimpses of the domestic economy of the inhabitants, and admiring not a little the perfect equality and general good understanding which existed between the pigs, babies, dogs, cats, and chickens. The pigs gravely took pieces of *tortillas* from the mouths of the babies, and the babies as gravely took other pieces away from the pigs. B—— observed that this was as near an approach to those millennial days when the lion and the lamb should lie down together as we should probably live to see, and suggested that a particular "note" should be made of it for the comfort of Father Miller and the Second-Advent Saints in general. There was one house in which we noticed a row of shelves containing sundry articles of merchandise, among which long-necked bottles of various pleasant hues were most conspicuous, and in front of which was a rude counter, behind which again was a short lady of considerably lighter complexion than the average, to whom our colored friend tipped his hat gallantly, informing us at the same time that this was the "Maison de Commerce de Viscomte A. de B—— B—— et Co.;" the "Et Co." consisting of the Viscomte's wife, two sons, and five daughters, whose names all appeared in full in the Viscomte's circulars. Had we been told that here was the residence of some cazique with an unpronounceable name, we might have thought the thing in keeping, and passed on without ceremony; but a Viscomte was not to be treated so lightly, and we turned

and bowed profoundly to the short lady behind the counter, who rose and courtesied with equal profundity.

We reached the beach just as the sun was setting, where we found our mate with the yawl: "An' it bates any city ye've seen, I'll be bound! It's pier number one, is this blessed spot of dirt where ye are just now; may be ye don't know it! And yonder hen-coop is the custom-house, be sure! and that dirty clout is the Nagur King's flag, bad luck to it! and it's meself who expects to live to see the stripes and forty stars to back 'em, (divil a one less!) wavin' here! Hurrah for Old Zack!—an' it's him that can do it!"

It was clear that our mate, who had not looked at a bottle during the whole voyage, thought a "d'hrap" necessary to neutralize the miasma of San Juan.

"Perhaps ye know what ye'r laughing at, my dark boy; an' it's meself that'll be afther givin' ye a taste of the way we Yankees do the thing, savin' the presence of his honor here," said the mate, dashing his hat on the ground, and advancing a step toward my new acquaintance, who recoiled in evident alarm. We interposed, and the mate cooled at once, and shook hands cordially with the colored gentleman, although he spoiled the amende by immediately going to the water's brink and carefully washing his palms.

While this scene was transpiring, a ghostly-looking individual, wan with numberless fevers, approached us. He was dressed in white, wore a jacket and a glazed cap, and upon the latter, in gilded capitals, we read "POLICE." He took off his cap, bowed low, for he was used to it, and said that Her Britannic Majesty's Consul General presented his respects to the gentlemen, regretted that, being confined to his house by bodily infirmity, he could not wait on them in person, and hoped that under the circumstances the gentlemen would do him the favor to call upon him.

We responded by following the lead of the wan policeman (there was only one other, the rest had run away,) who

opened a wicket leading within the cane enclosure of the custom-house, entered that building, and ascending a rough, narrow, and ricketty flight of stairs, we were ushered into what at home would be called a shocking bad garret, but which were the apartments of Her Britannic Majesty's Consul General. A long table stood in the centre, and a couple of candles flared in the breeze that came in at the unglazed openings at either end of the apartment, giving a dim intermittent light, by means of which, however, we succeeded in discovering Mr. C——, the Consul General. He was reclining on a rude settee, and rose with difficulty to welcome us. He apologized for his rough quarters, betraying by his pronunciation that his youth at least had been passed among the haunted glens of Scotland. He had formerly been a member of Parliament, and had been nearly a year on this coast, in a service clearly little congenial to his feelings, and far from being in accordance with his notions of honor and justice. We found him intelligent and agreeable, and as free from prejudices as a Briton could be, without ceasing to be a Briton and a Scot.

The evening passed pleasantly, ("barring" the mosquitos,) and though we were told of scorpions, which are often found when people turn down their blankets, and of numerous lizards, which insinuate themselves over night in one's boots, we were too glad to get on shore to be much alarmed by the recital. Upon leaving, we were pressed to come every day to the consulate to dine; for we were assured, and with truth, that it was impossible to procure a reasonably decent meal elsewhere in the town. The Nicaraguans at the fort above, it was asserted, had bought up all the vegetables and edibles intended for San Juan, having determined to starve the hated English out, and there was not a foot of cultivated ground within fifty miles; consequently the market was poorly supplied, except with ship provisions, and of these we had had quite enough. This was far from being comfortable, for we

had expected to find at San Juan a profusion of all the productions of the tropics, concerning which travellers had written so enthusiastically; to be put, therefore, on allowances of ship-biscuit and salt pork, was too much to permit any consideration of delicacy, so we accepted Mr. C——'s generous offer, returning on board to be phlebotomized by a horde of barbarous mosquitos, and to get up next morning feverish and unrefreshed, and only prevented from appealing to the medicine-chest by the happy consciousness that we were near the land.

The cook's nondescript mess to which we had been treated every morning since we left New York, and which had been called by way of courtesy "breakfast," was soon disposed of, and we went on shore, where our colored friend received us with a low bow, informing us at the same time that our house was ready. He led the way to a building not far distant from the "Maison de Commerce," opening upon aristocratic King street. It was constructed of rough boards, and was elevated on posts, so that everybody who entered had to take a short run and flying leap, and was fortunate if he did not miss his aim and bark his shins in the attempt. It was satisfactory to know that the structure was comparatively new, and that the colonies of scorpions, lizards, house-snakes, cockroaches, and the other numerous, nameless, and nondescript vermin which flourish here, had not had time to multiply to any considerable extent. And though there was a large pile of tobacco in bales in one corner, with no other object movable or immovable in the room, the novelty of the thing was enough to compensate for all deficiencies, and we ordered our baggage to be at once brought to the house. By way, doubtless, of indicating the capacity of the structure, our colored friend told us that this had been the head-quarters of a party of Americans bound for California for the space of six weeks, and that forty of the number had contrived to quarter here; a new and practical illustration of the indefi-

nite compressibility of Yankee matter, which surpassed all our previous conceptions. Our friend had provided for us in other ways, and had engaged a place where we might obtain our breakfasts, and proposed to introduce us to the

"OUR HOUSE" AT SAN JUAN.

family which was to furnish that important meal. The house was close by, and we were collectively and individually presented to Monsieur S——, who had been a grenadier under Napoleon, had served in numerous campaigns, had been in many bloody battles, and had probably escaped being shot because he was too thin to be hit. We were also introduced to the spouse of Monsieur S——, who was the very reverse of her lord, and who gave us a very good breakfast and superb chocolate, for which we paid only a dollar each per day. It was a blessed thing for our exchequer that we didn't dine, sup, and lodge there! At the same place breakfasted a couple of Spanish gentlemen, who had come out in the schooner, with a valuable cargo of goods for the interior. Our hostess certainly could not have had the heart to charge them a dollar for breakfast, for they had heard of revolutions and a terrible civil war in Nicaragua, and had been fright-

ened out of their appetites. A "bad speculation" at the best was before them, perhaps pecuniary ruin. We pitied them, but our appetites did not suffer from sympathy.

The day was passed in receiving visits of ceremony, arranging our new quarters, rigging hammocks, (which we obtained, at but little more than twice their actual value, at the "Maison de" Commerce of the Viscomte,) and dragging to light and air our mildewed wardrobes. We thought of consigning our soiled linen to the women at the lagoon: but the sturdy blows of their clubs still sounded in our ears, and we trusted to the future; but the future brought rough stones in place of the smooth canoe!

That night we passed comfortably in our new quarters, interrupted only by various droppings from the roof, which the active fancies of sundry members of the party converted into scorpions and other noxious insects. All slept, notwithstanding, until broad daylight next morning, when every one was roused by the firing of guns, and a great noise of voices, apparently in high altercation, combined with the cackling of hens, the barking of dogs, and the squealing of pigs; a noise unprecedented for the variety of its constituent sounds.

"A revolution, by Jove!" exclaimed M——, whose brain was full of the news from the interior; "it has got here already!"

The doors were nevertheless thrown open, and every unkempt head was thrust out to discover the cause of the tumult. The scene that presented itself passes description. There was a mingled mass of men, women, and children, some driving pigs and poultry, others flourishing sticks; here a woman with a pig under one arm and a pair of chickens in each hand; there an urchin gravely endeavoring to carry a long-nosed porker, nearly as large as himself, and twice as noisy; there a busy party, forming a cordon around a mother pig with a large family, and the whole excited, swaying,

screaming mass retreating before the two policemen in white, each bearing a sword, a pistol, and a formidable looking blunderbuss.

"They are driving out the poor people," said M——; "it is quite too bad!"

But the manner in which two or three old ladies flourished their sticks in the faces of our wan friend and his companion, betokened, I thought, anything but bodily fear. Still, the whole affair was a mystery; and when the crowd stopped short before our doors, and every dark visage, in which anger and supplication were strangely mingled, was turned towards us, each individual vociferating the while, at the top of his voice, we were puzzled beyond measure. "Death to the English!" was about all we could gather, until the wan policeman came up and explained, under a torrent of vituperation, that he and his companion were merely carrying into effect a wholesome regulation which Her Majesty's Consul General had promulgated, to the effect that the inhabitants of San Juan (which he called Greytown) should no longer allow the pigs and poultry to roam at large, but should keep them securely "cooped and penned," under penalty of having them shot by Her Majesty's servants; and as the aforesaid pigs and poultry had roamed at their will since the time "the memory of man runneth not back thereto," and as there were neither coops nor pens, it was very clear that the wholesome regulation could be but partially complied with. A stout mulatto, behind the policeman, carried a pig and several fowls, which had evidently met a recent and violent end; and we had strong misgivings as to the manner in which the various small porkers and chickens which we had encountered at the consul's table had been procured.

The pale policeman grew pathetic, and was almost moved to tears when he said that, while in the performance of his duty, he was assailed as we saw, and that all his explanations were unregarded, and he was disposed to do as his compan-

ions had done—run away, and leave the town to the dominion of the pigs and chickens.

The crowd, which had been comparatively quiet during this recital, now broke out in reply, and gathering countenance from the presence of the Americans, fairly hustled the policemen into the middle of the street, and might have treated them to a cold bath in the harbor, had they not been recalled by the voice of the Viscomte, who mounted a block and declaimed furiously, in mingled Spanish and French, against the "perfidious English," and talked of natural and municipal rights in a strain quite edifying, and eminently French. But as the Viscomte had been instrumental in bringing the English there, he did not get much of our sympathy. He had lost a pet pig that morning, which gave pith to his speech; and we determined to pay our particular respects to it that evening at the consul's.

To the appeals made to us directly, we were, as became us, diplomatically evasive; but the people were easily satisfied, and late that night we were treated to a serenade, the pauses of which were filled in with, "*Vivan los Americanos del Norte;* and next day the news was current that six American vessels of war were on their way to San Juan to drive out the English, whose effective force consisted of the wan policeman and his equally wan companion! And the consul himself did us the honor to hope that we had said nothing to encourage the poor people in their perversity, for he almost despaired of making them respectable citizens! They couldn't discern, he was sorry to say, their own best interests. We might have suggested to him that circumstances here were quite different from those which surrounded the little towns of Scotland, and that which might be "good for the people" in one instance, might be eminently out of place in another; but then it was none of our business.

During the day we paid a visit to the other side of the harbor, where some Mosquito Indians, who came down the

coast to strike turtle, had taken up their temporary residence. They were the most squalid wretches imaginable, and their huts consisted of a few poles set in a slanting direction, upon which was loosely thrown a quantity of palm leaves. The

HUT OF MOSQUITO INDIANS.

sides were open, and altogether the structure must have cost fifteen minutes' labor. Under this shelter crowded a variety of half-naked figures, begrimed with dirt, their faces void of expression, and altogether brutish. They stared at us vacantly, and then resumed their meal, which consisted of a portion of the flesh of the alligator and the manitus, chopped in large pieces and thrown into the fire until the outer portions were completely charred. These were devoured without salt, and with a wolfish greediness which was horrible to behold. At a little distance, away from the stench and filth, the huts, with the groups beneath and around them, were really picturesque objects.

One hut had been vacated for the moment; against it the fishing rods and spears of its occupants were resting, and in front a canoe was drawn up; this attracted our particular notice, and I had a sketch made of it on the spot. As we

paddled along the shore, we saw many thatched huts in cool, leafy arbors, surrounded by spots of bare, hard ground, fleckered with the sunlight, which danced in mazes as the wind waved the branches above. Around them were dark, naked figures, and before them were light canoes, drawn close to the bank, filling out the foreground of pictures such as we had imagined in reading the quaint recitals of the early voyagers, and the effects of which were heightened by the parrots and macaws, fluttering their bright wings on the roofs of the huts, and deafening the spectator with their shrill voices. Occasionally a tame monkey was seen swinging by his tail from the branches of the trees, and making grimaces at us as we passed.

The habits of the natives were unchanged in the space of three hundred years; their dwellings were the same; the scenes we gazed upon were counterparts of those which the Discoverers had witnessed. Eternal summer reigned above them; their wants were few and simple, and profuse nature supplied them in abundance with all the necessaries of existence. They little thought that the party of strangers, gliding silently before them, were there to prepare the way for the clanging steamer, and that the great world without was meditating the Titanic enterprise of laying open their primeval solitudes, grading down their hills, and opening, from one great ocean to the other, a gigantic canal, upon which the navies of the world might pass, laden with the treasures of two hemispheres!

CHAPTER II.

THE PORT OF SAN JUAN DE NICARAGUA; ITS POSITION; CLIMATE; POPULATION; EDIFICES OF ITS INHABITANTS; ITS INSECTS; THE NIGUA; THE SCORPION, ETC.; ITS EXPORTS AND IMPORTS; POLITICAL CONDITION; IMPORTANCE, PRESENT AND PROSPECTIVE; SEIZURE BY THE ENGLISH, ETC.—MOUTH OF THE RIVER SAN JUAN—THE COLORADO MOUTH—THE TAURO—NAVIGATION OF THE RIVER—BONGOS AND PIRAGUAS—LOS MARINEROS—DISCOVERY AND EARLY HISTORY OF THE PORT OF SAN JUAN.

The Port of San Juan derives its principal importance from the fact that it is the only possible eastern terminus for the proposed grand inter-oceanic canal, through the territories of Nicaragua, via the river San Juan and Lake Nicaragua; and from the further circumstance of being the only available port of Nicaragua upon the Atlantic. The harbor is not large, yet it is altogether better and more spacious than is generally supposed. The entrance is easy, and vessels of the largest class find little difficulty in passing the mouth, and obtaining within a safe and commodious anchorage. It has been represented that, in consequence of the peculiar make of the land, it is extremely difficult to be found. This is true to a certain extent; but although the coast in the immediate vicinity is low, yet a short distance back the land is high and marked, and cannot be mistaken. With proper charts, correct sketches of the coasts, and with a lighthouse on Point Arenas, every difficulty would be obviated. This is evident even to the unprofessional observer. The harbor is probably adequate to every purpose connected with the proposed canal.

The town of San Juan consists (June, 1850) of fifty or sixty palm thatched houses, or rather huts, arranged with some degree of regularity, upon the south-western shore of the harbor. It is supported entirely by the trade carried on through it; and its inhabitants are dependent upon the supplies brought down from the interior, or furnished from trading vessels, for the means of subsistence. There are no cultivated lands in the vicinity, and excepting the narrow space occupied by the town, and a small number of acres on the island opposite, where a few cattle find pasturage, the primitive forest is unbroken by clearings of any description. The ground upon which the town is built is sandy, and although elevated but a few feet above the water, is, nevertheless, dry. The country all around it is low, and is a short distance back from the shore really marshy, interspersed with numerous lagoons. After penetrating a number of miles into the interior, however, higher land is found, with a soil adapted for every purpose of cultivation.

Although the climate of San Juan is warm and damp, it is exempt from the fevers and epidemics which prevail in most places similarly situated, upon the shores of the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea. I could not learn that any cases of the yellow fever, or *vomito*, have ever occurred here; and when the cholera, in 1837, (five years after the period of its ravages in the United States,) devastated the interior, and almost depopulated the ports to the northward and southward, San Juan entirely escaped its visitations. It may safely be said that there are few ports, if any, under the tropics of equal salubrity. The nature of the soil, the fact that the malaria of the coast is constantly swept back by the north-east trades, and that good water may be obtained in abundance, at a depth of a few feet below the surface, no doubt contribute to this result. It is, however, a singular circumstance, vouched for by the older residents of San Juan, that the island or opposite shore of the harbor, not more than half

a mile distant, and which, from the greater depth of water immediately fronting it, and other circumstances, seems to be the best site for a town, is fatal to those who may attempt to occupy it. A settlement was commenced there a number of years ago, but the inhabitants were decimated within the first two months; after which the rest removed to the other shore. The same cause, it is said, led to the abandonment of the military works which the Spaniards had erected there before the revolt of the colonies. The cause of this difference is not apparent, but no doubt as to the fact seems to exist among the inhabitants. Foreigners at San Juan, however, by observing ordinary and proper precautions, need not, I am convinced, form exceptions to the general good health of the native inhabitants.

The temperature of San Juan varies a little with the different seasons of the year, but is generally pleasant, differing not much from that of New York in the month of July. The range of the thermometer is not, however, so great as it is with us during that month. During my stay in June, 1849, and upon my return in the same month, in 1850, the range was from 74° of Fahrenheit at sunrise, to 85° at the hottest hour of the day. In the evening there is usually a pleasant and invigorating sea-breeze.

The population of the town does not exceed three hundred, having considerably diminished since the English usurpation. Besides what may be called the native inhabitants, and who exhibit the same characteristics in language, habits, and customs with the lower classes in the interior of the state, there are a few foreigners, and some creoles of pure stock, who reside here as agents, or consignees of mercantile houses, and as commission dealers. There are also the English authorities, consisting chiefly of negroes from Jamaica. The inhabitants, therefore, exhibit every variety of race and complexion. Whites, Indians, negroes, mestizos, and sambos,—black, brown, yellow, and fair,—all mingle together with the

utmost freedom, and in total disregard of those conventionalities which are founded on caste. In what might be called the best families, if it were possible to institute comparisons on the wrong side of zero, it is no uncommon thing to find three and four shades of complexion, from which it may be inferred that the social relations are very lax. This is unfortunately the fact; and the examples which have been set upon this coast in times past, by Jamaica traders, have not had the effect of improving morals. There is neither church nor school-house in San Juan, nor indeed in the whole of what the English facetiously call the "Mosquito Kingdom." Before the seizure, San Juan was a curacy, dependent upon the Diocess of Nicaragua, but subsequently to that event it was vacated, in consequence of the obstacles thrown in the way of its continuance by the English officials, whose high sense of Christian duty would not permit them to tolerate anything but the English Church, which is, I believe, the established religion throughout the dominions of "His Mosquito Majesty!" Occasionally a priest, in his black robes, is seen flitting about the town; but unless it is desired to find out the residence of the prettiest of the nut-brown señoritas, it is not always prudent to inquire too closely into his movements.

The dwellings of the inhabitants, as already intimated, are of the rudest and most primitive description, and make no approach to what, in the United States, would be regarded as respectable out-houses. They are, in fact, mere thatched sheds, roughly boarded up and floored, or made of a kind of wicker work of canes, sometimes plastered over with mud. The furniture, which seldom consists of more than a hammock, a high table, a few chairs, and a bed, is entirely in keeping with the edifices. Yet, mean and uninviting as these structures are, they answer a very good purpose in a climate where anything beyond a roof to keep off the sun and the rain may almost be regarded as a superfluity. The heavy thatch

of palm leaves or long grass is an effectual protection against these, and though it furnishes excellent quarters for scorpions, small serpents, and other pleasant colonists, yet these soon cease to excite apprehension, and, with the mice and cockroaches, sink into common-places. The sting of the domestic scorpion, so far as I am able to learn of its effects from others, never having myself experienced it, is not much worse than that of a wasp or hornet, and seldom produces any serious result. The *alacran del monte*, scorpion of the forest, or wild scorpion, is more to be dreaded; its sting sometimes induces fever, causing the tongue to swell so as to render utterance difficult, or impossible. This latter never inflicts its sting unless pressed upon, or accidentally disturbed by some part of the person. It is quite as common in San Juan as in any part of the country; being brought there probably with the Brazil wood, the knots and crevices of which afford it an excellent lodgment. And, while upon insects, I may mention a kind of a flea, called *nigua* or *chigoe* by the Spaniards, and "*jigger*" by the West Indian English, which generally attacks the feet, working its way, without being felt, beneath the skin, and there depositing its eggs. A small sack speedily forms around these, which constantly increases in size, first creating an itching sensation, and afterwards, unless removed, becoming painful. When small, it may be extracted without difficulty, but when larger, the operation is delicate and often painful; for if the sack is broken, a bad ulcer, extremely liable to inflammation, and sometimes affecting the entire foot and leg, is a probable result. The best surgeon in these cases is an Indian boy, who always performs the operation skillfully, and considers a *medio* (sixpence) a capital fee for his services. He has a sharp eye for "las niguas," and will frequently detect them before they are seen or felt by the strangers in whose feet they are burrowing. It is well to submit one's pedal extremities to his criticism as often as once every three days,

while sojourning in San Juan, where this insect is more common than anywhere else in Central America. When to this digression on insects and reptiles, I have added that the harbor is infested by sharks, and that alligators are far from rare both there and in the lagunas near the town, the catalogue of things annoying and disagreeable to be encountered here is nearly complete. But after all, the inconvenience or danger from such sources is chiefly imaginary, and exists more in anticipation than in reality.

From what has been said it will be seen that San Juan has no resources of its own, and derives its present importance solely from the trade which is carried on through it with the interior. A considerable part of the exports and imports of Nicaragua passes here. The exports are indigo, Brazil wood, hides, and bullion, and the imports manufactured goods of every description, suitable for general use. The indigo and bullion go, in great part, to England, by the British West Indian line of steamers, which touches here monthly, and which has already nearly monopolized the carrying of those articles of high value but small bulk, upon which it is desirable to realize quick returns. The Brazil wood and hides, on the other hand, pass chiefly to the United States and Jamaica. By far the greater proportion of the carrying trade is in the hands of Americans, conducted through native houses, and through travelling agents in the interior: and considerably more than two-thirds of the tonnage entering the port is American. An Italian vessel comes once or twice a-year, and a couple of French vessels occasionally, as also some nondescript coasters, bearing the New Granadian or Venezuelan flags. A portion of the trade of Costa Rica, via the rivers San Juan and Serapiqui, is now carried on through this port. There are no means of ascertaining its value, nor that of the general commerce of San Juan, inasmuch as no regular tables have been kept at the Custom House. Previous to the seizure of the port by the English,

in 1848, the duties collected here by the Nicaraguan government amounted to about $100,000 per annum; and as the rate of imposts was about 20 per cent., the value of the imports may be approximately calculated at nearly $500,000. Since the English usurpation, the trade has seriously diminished, in consequence of the depression and uncertainty which it has created in the interior, and which have induced many of the native merchants to contract their business. The additional duties levied by the usurping authorities have also contributed to the same results. They have imposed an import and export duty of 2½ per cent. ad valorem, and made other onerous restrictions on commerce. Under these, they have nevertheless lately farmed out the customs at $10,000 per annum, which, as this is apart from the cost of collection, implies a trade of at least $300,000.[1] The actual trade of the port may now be roughly estimated at $400,000, not allowing for the increase which has already followed the general commercial activity induced by the California movement, nor for the direct influences of the partial opening of the Nicaragua route of transit, and the consequent direction of public attention and individual enterprise to that portion of the Central American Isthmus. As the trade of Nicaragua, by way of this port must pass through the river San Juan, the Nicaraguan Customs Establishment has been fixed at the old Fort of San Carlos, at the head of the river, on the lake. The average rate of duty exacted under the Nicaraguan tariff, is about 21 per cent. ad valorem,[2] which, added to the

[1] Since the above was written, the collection of customs at San Juan, from motives of policy, has been *suspended*, but not permanently abandoned, by the British Government.

[2] It should be mentioned, however, that although the Nicaraguan tariff is nominally 21 per cent. ad valorem, yet as one half of the amount of duties may be paid in Government *vales*, or notes, which range from ten to sixty per cent. in value, according to their class and date, it is practically not more than 15 per cent.

British impositions at San Juan, makes the total duty to be paid on articles passing into the interior about 24 per cent.

When the political questions connected with British aggressions in Nicaragua shall have been satisfactorily and permanently adjusted, and the projected canal really commenced, this port will become one of the first importance, if not the most important, on the continent. Its prospective value can hardly be estimated; for apart from its position in respect to the proposed work, it is the only Atlantic port of one of the finest countries under the tropics, possessing inexhaustible agricultural and mineral resources, which recent movements indicate with certainty are destined to a speedy development.

As already observed, this is the only possible Atlantic terminus for the (probably) only possible ship-canal route across the continent. And this is to be regarded as the great and controlling fact which led to its seizure by the English, at the moment when it became certain that California would fall into the hands of the United States, and the question of an inter-oceanic communication became one of immediate and practical importance. The seizure, it is well known, was made under the shallow pretext of supporting the territorial pretensions of a tribe of savages, or mixed negroes and Indians, called Moscos, or Mosquitos, and in virtue of some equivocal relations which the pirates of Jamaica anciently maintained with them. When, however, it is known that this was the principal port of entry of Nicaragua under the Spanish dominion; that for more than three hundred years it was the avenue through which its trade was conducted; that the river flowing past it was defended by massive and costly works, which, although in ruins, are yet imposing; that no Mosquito Indian ever resided here; that all its inhabitants were, and with the exception of a few foreign merchants and the English officials, still are Nicaraguans; and that England herself recognized it as pertaining to

Nicaragua by blockading it as a part of her territories; and when to all this is added the fact, that the Mosquito Indians never, themselves, pretended to any territorial rights here or elsewhere, until induced to do so by British agents, the enormity of the seizure is rendered apparent. But as the facts connected with these and similar encroachments will form the subject of a separate chapter, it is unnecessary to refer further to them here. Since the seizure of the port, and in ludicrous commentary on the assertion of the British Government, that its sole design in taking that step was the "*re-establishment* of Mosquito rights and authority," its municipal and other regulations, not excepting its port charges and customs' rates, have been promulgated and fixed by an officer styling himself "Her Britannic Majesty's Consul," or "Vice Consul;" who has for his executive force a few Jamaica negroes, called, probably in irony, "police." He is, in fact, dictator of the place, and the inhabitants are subject without appeal to his will, for there are no written laws or fixed regulations of any kind. He assumes to dispose of lands, and gives titles under his consular seal; nor does he, ever so remotely, appear to recognize the so-called Mosquito King. Indeed, the only evidence that this farcical character is held in remembrance at all is that a flag, said to be his, is occasionally hoisted in an open space in the centre of the town. The English flag, however, floats over what is called the Custom House, and is the only one for which any degree of respect is exacted The new tariff, promulgated here in April, 1850, was signed "J. M. Daly, Collector," and did not purport to have been enacted by any superior authority. Indeed, the present situation of the town, overawed as it constantly is by one or two British vessels, is anomalous in the extreme. If, as it is pretended, this port belongs to the supposititious Mosquito King, it is difficult to understand how a second party can exercise sovereignty over it; or upon what principles of international law the

consuls of one nation can assume municipal and general administrative authority in the ports of another. The simple fact is, that Great Britain, having secured possession of this important port, under a pretext which deceives nobody, no longer cares to stultify herself by affecting to conform to that pretext. The thing is too absurd to be continued.

The River San Juan reaches the ocean by several mouths. The divergence takes place about twenty miles from the sea, forming a low delta, penetrated by numerous canals, or, as they are called on the Lower Mississippi, *bayous*, and lagunas. The principal branch is the Colorado, which carries off at least two-thirds of the water of the river, and which empties into the ocean some ten or fifteen miles to the southward of the port. There is an almost impassable bar at the entrance, which would preclude the ascent of vessels, even if the depth of water above permitted of their proceeding after it was passed. The little steamer "Orus," nevertheless, after repeated trials, succeeded in passing it in August last. There is another small channel called the *Taura*, which reaches the sea midway between the port and the mouth of the Colorado. The branch flowing into the harbor, the one through which the ascending and descending boats pass, carries off only about one-third of the water of the river. It has also a bar at the mouth, that is, at its point of debouchure into the harbor, upon which, at low tide, there are but three or four feet of water. This passed, the bed of the river is wide and studded with low islands; but excepting in the channel, which is narrow and crooked, the water is very shallow. It has been suggested that the Colorado branch might be dammed, and a greater column of water thrown into the other, or San Juan branch. But this suggestion can only be made by those who are wholly unacquainted with the subject. Allowing it to be possible to build a dam, the stream would find a new channel to the sea; or if it took the direction of the harbor, fill it up, during the first rainy season, with

mud, or at once destroy the sandy barriers which now form and protect it. As will be seen, when I come to speak of the practicability of a canal, the utmost that can be done with the river is to dredge out the channel to the Colorado, and remove some of the obstacles at the various rapids above, after which it might be navigated by small steamers. It cannot be made navigable for ships or vessels of any kind, except of the lightest draught, by any practicable system of improvements.

The boats used upon the river for carrying freight and passengers are exaggerated canoes, called *bongos*. Some are hollowed from a single tree, but the better varieties are built, with some degree of skill, from the timber of the *cedro*, a very light and durable kind of wood, which grows abundantly about the lakes. The largest of these carry from eight to ten tons, and draw two or three feet of water when loaded. They are long, and rather deep and narrow, and have, when fully manned, from eight to twelve oarsmen, who drive the boat by means of long sweeps and setting-poles. Sails are seldom if ever used, except upon the lake. The masts are unshipped and left at the head of the river in descending, and resumed again in returning. These boats have a small space near the stern, called the "*chopa*," covered with a board roof, a thatch of palm leaves, or with hides, which is assigned to the passengers. The rest of the boat is open, and the oarsmen, or, as they call themselves, *marineros*, sailors, are without protection, and sleep upon their benches at night, covered only with their blankets, and with the gunwale of the boat for a common pillow. The captain, or *patron*, is the steersman, and occupies a narrow deck at the stern, called the *pineta*, upon which he also sleeps, coiling himself up in a knot, if the boat is small and the pineta narrow. The freight, if liable to damage from exposure, is covered with raw hides, which, between sun and rain, soon diffuse an odor very unlike the perfumes which are said to load the breezes of Arabia

the Blest. The usual freight from San Juan to Granada, a distance of one hundred and sixty or one hundred and seventy miles, is from thirty to fifty cents per cwt.: if the articles are bulky, it is more. The boatmen are paid from seven to eight dollars the trip, down from Granada and back, which usually occupies from twenty to thirty days, although with proper management it might be made in less time. Time, however, in these regions is not regarded as of much importance, and everything is done very leisurely. It is only in active communities that its value is considered.

Columbus coasted along the entire eastern shore of Central America, from Cape Honduras to Nombre de Dios, or Chagres, in 1502, and was probably the first discoverer of the Port of San Juan. In 1529, Captain Diego Machuca, residing in the city of Granada, on Lake Nicaragua, undertook the exploration of that lake, discovered its outlet, passed down the San Juan to the port at its mouth, and sailed thence to Nombre de Dios. The principal rapids in the stream still bears his name. We are informed by the historian Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo y Valdez, who was in Nicaragua in 1529, and was personally acquainted with Machuca, that the latter projected a colony at the mouth of the river, but was interrupted in his design by Robles, commandant at Nombre de Dios, who contemplated the same enterprise. At how early a date the Spanish made establishments at San Juan, is not known; but it is a historical fact, that early in the seventeenth century a fort existed at San Carlos, which was captured by the English in 1665, but recovered by De Menços and De Caldas, officers of Spain in the then Kingdom of Guatemala. (*Juarros' History of the Kingdom of Guatemala, Baily's Trans.*, p. 67.) In consequence of this event, a royal decree was issued, commanding that the entrance of the river should be fortified; which order was carried into effect by Don Fernando de Escobeda, who examined the port and river, and built a fort in obedience to his instructions. It is also a his-

torical fact, that at the period of the *rebuilding* of the Fort of San Juan, on the river above, about 1727, a garrison was maintained here. At that time not less than twelve military stations existed on the river; the first was at San Carlos, at the head of the stream; the second at the mouth of the Rio Savalos; the third, a short distance from the mouth of the Rio Poco Sol; the fourth, the Castle of San Juan; the fifth, the Island of Bartola; sixth, a high bank below the Rapids de los Valos, called "*Diamante;*" seventh, at the Rapids of Machuca; eighth, on an island at the mouth of the River San Carlos; ninth, at the mouth of the Rio San Francisco; tenth, at the mouth of the Serapiqui; eleventh, at the point called "Conception," opposite an island of the same name; and twelfth, at the Port of San Juan itself, with an intermediate temporary station called "Rosario."

The commerce of Nicaragua with Europe and the West Indies was always carried on through this port; and we have records of as early a date as 1665, of vessels clearing for the ports of Spain from the city of Granada. San Juan was made a port of entry by royal order of the King of Spain, dated February 26, 1796. By a royal order of the 27th of March following, regulations were made for promoting the settlement of the country in the neighborhood of that port, among which was one authorizing the introduction, in the ports of Spain, of dye and other woods cut there, or of coffee grown there, free of duty. From this period an augmented military force was kept up at San Juan, and in 1821 additional defences were erected for their protection, as may be seen by the order of the Captain-General of Guatemala, of the date of May 2, 1821. Upon the declaration of independence, the royal troops were expelled by the patriots of Nicaragua, by whom the port was indisputably occupied until the British seizure in January, 1848.

CHAPTER III.

THE MAGNATES OF SAN JUAN—CAPTAIN SAMUEL SHEPHERD—ROYAL GRANTS—VEXATIOUS DELAYS—IMPOSING DEPARTURE—ENTRANCE OF THE RIVER SAN JUAN—"PEELING" OF THE MARINEROS—CHARACTER OF THE STREAM—THE JUANILLO—AN IMMEMORIAL STOPPING-PLACE—BONGOS, AND THEIR EQUIPMENTS AND STORES—MEALS—ESPRIT DE CORPS AMONG THE BOATMEN—THE "ORACION"—QUEER CAPRICES—MEDIO—OUR ACCOMMODATIONS—A SPECIMEN NIGHT ON THE RIVER—MORNING SCENES AND IMPRESSIONS—BONGO LIFE—THE COLORADO MOUTH—CHANGE OF SCENERY—THE IGUANA—A SOLITARY ESTABLISHMENT—TROPICAL EASE—THE RIO SERAPIQUI—FIGHT BETWEEN THE NICARAGUANS AND THE ENGLISH—"A FAMOUS VICTORY"—THE RIO SAN FRANCISCO—REMOLINO GRANDE—PICTURESQUE RIVER VIEWS—THE HILLS AND PASS OF SAN CARLOS—THUNDER STORMS—THE MACHUCA RAPIDS—MELCHORA INDIANS—RAPIDS OF MICO AND LOS VALOS—RAPIDS OF THE CASTILLO—ISLAND OF BARTOLA—CAPTURE BY LORD NELSON—THE "CASTILLO VIEJO," OR OLD CASTLE OF SAN JUAN—"A DIOS CALIFORNIA!"—ASCEND TO THE RUINS—STRONG WORKS—CAPTURE OF THE FORT BY THE ENGLISH IN 1780—FAILURE OF THE EXPEDITION AGAINST NICARAGUA; A SCRAP OF HISTORY—PASSAGE OF THE RAPIDS—DIFFERENT ASPECT OF THE RIVER—A BLACK EAGLE—NINETY MILES IN SIX DAYS—THE FORT OF SAN CARLOS—GREAT LAKE OF NICARAGUA—LAND AT SAN CARLOS—THE COMMANDANTE—HEARTY WELCOME—NOVEL SCENES—ANCIENT DEFENCES—VIEW FROM THE FORT—THE RIO FRIO—THE GUATOSOS INDIANS—A PARADISE FOR ALLIGATORS, AND SOME HAPPY INSTITUTIONS OF THEIRS.

MOST small communities have in their midst one or two resident notabilities, who are regarded something in the light of oracles, and to whom general deference is acceded. San Juan is not an exception; and Captain Samuel Shepherd is at once, *per se*, a personage so characteristic and so associated and identified with the place, that no description of San Juan would be complete in which he failed to be a promi-

nent feature. His residence is the most pretentious edifice in San Juan; it is, in fact, the architectural wonder of the place, inasmuch as it is not only a framed building, but has a shingled roof and glazed windows. It was built by Captain Shepherd, in his more prosperous days, when he was the principal trader on the coast from Boca del Toro to Yucatan, and before age had crippled his energies, and reverses dissipated his fortune. He is now old and nearly blind, but hale, cheerful, intelligent, and communicative, and capable of giving more information relative to the coast than any man living. He seldom leaves his hammock, which is swung in the principal room of his house, and in which he receives all his visitors. We called upon him, on the second day after our arrival, and were received with every demonstration of respect. The captain was never more eloquent, and although he had always been classed as an Englishman, yet he said he was born in the United States, and meant to claim its protection as a citizen. He had been appointed "Governor of the Port," or some such nominal and trumpery office, by the British Consul, by way of conciliation, but he was not to be taken in so easily; and as for the orders which had been promulgated in his name, concerning the pigs and chickens, he protested it was altogether the consul's doings: he had shut up neither the one nor the other, and regarded these animals quite as good citizens as the rest; the consul might shoot any of them, (pigs or citizens,) if he dared. And as for the pretended English protectorate, and the authority assumed under it, the one was a fraud and the other an imposition; for whatever title the Mosquito Indians ever possessed, had been formally transferred and secured to him. And the captain here produced, from a very closely locked and substantial case, a variety of parchment grants and conveyances, bearing the "his + mark" of "Robert Charles Frederick," father of the little Sambo boy now wearing the Mosquitian purple, in which it was duly set forth and attested

that "upon the 24th of January, 1839, in consideration of the true and laudable services rendered to us by Samuel Shepherd, etc., we, Robert Charles Frederick, King of the Mosquito nation, of our special grace, and of our certain knowledge and free motion, have given and granted, and by these presents, sealed with our seal, do give and grant unto the said Samuel Shepherd, etc., all that tract of land lying between Blewfields River on the north, and San Juan River on the south," etc., etc., in the most approved form, and with royal prolixity, all of which is duly witnessed, together with the peaceable transfer and possession of the territory in question, approved by General Slam, Admiral Rodney, Lord Nelson, and other equally distinguished personages,[1] comprising the august council of the breechless but imperial "Robert Charles Frederick." Several other similar and equally formal documents were produced, in which the various Mosquito potentates had transferred to Mr. Shepherd and his associates about two-thirds of their pretended kingdom. When, in 1841, the English government sent its agents here to secure the country as a dependency on the British Empire, their first act was to procure the revocation of these grants, by the young Sambo, "George William Clarence," which was accordingly done; the act of revocation setting forth, in a most unfilial way, that "his late majesty was not in his right mind when he made them," that is, *was drunk!* But Captain Shepherd protests that the revocation was procured

[1] Like most savages, the Mosquito Indians are exceedingly vain, not less of names than apparel. It is a common thing to see a black fellow, without hat, shirt, or breeches, strutting through the little Indian town on the coast, in a buttonless military jacket, purchased from a Jew's cast-off clothing shop in Kingston, and given to him by some Jamaica trader in exchange for turtle shells. In nine cases out of ten the wearer proclaims his name to be Lord Wellington, General Wolfe, or Lord Nelson, or some other equally distinguished name, which he has heard the traders mention. The lowest rank thus assumed is that of General.

through the influence of Jamaica rum, that his titles are in no degree impaired by it, and that the "his + mark" of one savage is as good as that of another. He regards the British occupation, therefore, as a direct invasion of his rights and sovereignty, and insists that if the port does not belong to Nicaragua, it certainly does to him; a sequitur which we at once admitted, much to the captain's satisfaction, and to his admiration of American justice, discrimination, and judgment.

Once off from his hobby, the old sailor was more interesting, if less amusing, and talked of matters in general in a manner highly original. His account of the relations which existed between the mixed brood of Indians and Negroes on the coasts, and the Jamaica traders, was given with a directness somewhat startling to persons not yet emancipated from the conventional rigors of the United States, but which constituted the best evidence of its truth. To say that these relations were exceedingly free and easy, is hardly explicit enough, as will be admitted when it is known that the visit of the traders was looked forward to as a kind of festival, when all ages and sexes abandoned themselves to general drunkenness and indiscriminate licentiousness. Every old trader had a number of children at every landing-place or settlement on the coast; and on the occasion of each visit, he impiously baptized all those which he conceived might be his own. This indiscriminate intercourse, it can readily be imagined, has resulted in a complete demoralization of the natives, and has been attended by physical consequences quite as deplorable as those which have followed the intercourse of Europeans with some of the Pacific Islands. These relations were established by the pirates, when they thronged the Spanish main, from Jamaica as a centre, and they are now referred to, by the British government, as an evidence of ancient alliance, and in support of an assumed protectorate! It was not without a feeling of sympathy for the almost

sightless old captain, that we left him swinging in his hammock, where he is doubtless yet to be found, clinging hopefully to his parchment titles.

We remained six days at San Juan, at the end of which time, having witnessed a promiscuous affair called a fandango, not at all spiritualized by the West Indian variations on the none-too-delicate original, and exhausted the limited stock of amusements which the place affords, besides having become completely wearied with the low, monotonous scenery, and not a little disgusted because of the absence of those tropical luxuries of which we had formed so high anticipations, we were anxious for a change. But few boats arrived from the interior, in consequence of an attempted revolution, and these brought accounts of the state of affairs, which we afterwards found were much exaggerated, but which made us especially anxious to proceed on our journey. When, therefore, our baggage and stores had been fished up from the hold of the Frances, and piled in dire confusion in the middle of our partitionless house, no time was lost in preparing for our departure. Through the assistance of my colored friend, we had engaged one of the largest bongos then in port for our exclusive accommodation, paying dearly for the stipulation that no freight beyond our own should be taken,—an unnecessary precaution, by the way, of which our colored friend neglected to inform us, for the troubles in the interior prevented the merchants from shipping goods in that direction, and had it not been for our opportune arrival, the boat must have gone empty. This bongo bore the name of "La Granadina," and looked not wholly uncomfortable as she lay at her moorings, just off the shore. She had a crew of ten stalwart oarsmen, and was particularly commended on account of her *patron*, Pedro, one of the patriarchs of the river, who, amongst his other accomplishments, spoke a little English, of which, for a wonder, he was not at all vain. As soon as the arrangement was completed, our marineros made court to us

most assiduously, fairly hustling each other for the honor (worth a *medio*) of carrying the members of our party backwards and forth from "La Grenadina." One of the number, a slight but well-proportioned Mestizo, was a subject for the

OUR BONGO—"LA GRANADINA."

Washingtonians, and won the soubriquet of "Medio," from his frequent applications for sixpence. On these occasions he would gravely take off his hat, and throwing himself in a theatrical attitude, bring his closed left hand with Forrestian force on his naked breast, exclaiming, "*Soy un hombre bueno!*" I am a good man! It was worth the money to witness the relapse from dignity to servility when the coin touched his palm. Medio little thought how strict a parallel he afforded to men in other countries, and loftier spheres of action. Medio's price was sixpence, although he had served as sergeant in the army, and distinguished himself among the "veteranos."

The day of our departure had been fixed for the 12th, at four in the morning, and Pedro had promised faithfully to have all things in readiness. With the anticipation of an early start, we bade all our friends good-bye over night, and retired early, declining any provision for breakfast on shore, lest we might cause delays in the morning. Morning came, but not a sailor was to be seen near the "La Granadina," except the one who had kept watch over night; the rest, he said, would be there "*muy pronto*," very soon; whereupon he dodged beneath the *chopa*, and composed himself for another nap. We waited an hour on the shore; meantime

the sun came up, door after door was unbarred, and the people came streaming down to the water to perform their morning ablutions, evidently greatly puzzled to account for our presence there. Their salutations seemed to conceal a vast deal of irony, and I fear were not returned with the utmost amiability. At eight o'clock, after firmly resolving to hold Pedro to a strict accountability for his delinquency, we returned in high indignation to our old quarters, and despatched orders for breakfast. To our infinite surprise, Monsieur S. had already prepared it. He received us with a smile, and when the meal was finished, coolly asked our preferences for dinner! This was rather too severe an enforcement of our first lesson in native delays, and led to an explanation, in the course of which Monsieur told us that he had long since found out the absurdity of attempting to advise Americans in such matters; and ended with the assurance that if we got off by the middle of the afternoon we might regard ourselves as particularly fortunate. We nevertheless returned to the shore, and found part of the crew had assembled, and were collecting wood and arranging their kettles preparatory to making breakfast. Never was anything performed more deliberately; and the meal itself was disposed of with equal deliberation. It was nearly eleven when the kettles were again placed in the boat, and quite twelve when Pedro made his appearance. Fortunately for his sable skin, our impatience had taken the chronic form of dogged endurance, and we sat amongst boxes, trunks, and guns, silent and grim, but cherishing the determination to make ourselves even with the vagabonds before we got through with them. Monsieur S. proved to be right; and it was late in the afternoon before the last straggler was got in, and the signal was given for starting. We severally mounted on the naked shoulders of the men, and were deposited on the *pineta*, a novel mode of embarkation with which we afterwards became familiar. The sailors took their places, and Pedro, with a

great conch shell in one hand, gravely stationed himself at the tiller. The sweeps were raised, and every eye was fixed on the Patron, who glanced over the crew, as much as to ask "all ready?" and then, raising the shell to his lips, gave a long, unearthly blast. The sweeps fell simultaneously into the water, the men uttered a *hoo-pah*, the crowd on the beach shouted, the women waved their rebozos, while Ben unfurled the American flag at the bow. La Granadina seemed to fly through the water, and our friend, the Consul General, protruded his head from his hospitable garret, and waved his adieus as we swept by. The crew of the little Francis also hurrahed from her shrouds, and altogether, as Pedro, dropping his conch, proudly observed, it was a demonstration worthy of the occasion. He evidently thought it would tell well in the United States!

We were too glad to get off, to care much for anything else; nor did we experience many regrets when we took our last look at the long, low line of huts, and found ourselves shut in by the green banks of the river. Fairly in the stream, and out of sight of the town, the oars were drawn aboard, and every marinero stripped himself of his scanty clothing, which was carefully wrapped up, and deposited in a protected place, nor put on again until we reached the head of the river. This somewhat startling ceremony over, each man lighted a segar and resumed his oar; but the strokes were now leisurely made, and the severe realities of the voyage commenced. For some miles the banks of the river, as also the numerous islands which studded it, were low, covered with canes, and with a species of tall grass called *gamalote*. In places the stream was compressed between the islands, with a rapid current; while elsewhere it spread out in broad, glassy reaches, of great apparent depth, but shallow everywhere except in the channel; which, as the bed of the river is sand, is narrow and tortuous, and constantly shifting. A few miles above the harbor, we came to where the Juanillo,

"Little John," rejoins the river, from which it diverges some twenty-five miles above the mouth. After winding through the low grounds back of San Juan, spreading out into lagunas, and at one place into a considerable lake, it returns to the main stream, purple with vegetable infusions. The Indians sometimes penetrate this channel in canoes, for the purpose of shooting the wild fowl which people its marshy, pestilent borders, and of killing the manitus, which here finds a congenial solitude.

During the rainy season the whole marshy region through which the Juanillo flows is covered with water, as is also nearly the entire delta of the river, which, in the ordinary stages, is nowhere elevated more than a few feet above the river. It was now the commencement of the rains in the interior; the stream was rising, and, as our freight was comparatively light, we were enabled to proceed without much difficulty. We nevertheless sometimes ran aground, on which occasions our men leaped overboard, and putting their shoulders under the boat, lifted it off. The bongos are sometimes obliged, both in ascending and descending, to take out part of their freight, and depositing the remainder beyond the shallower sections of the river, return again for it. This, however, occurs only during the dry season, when the river has probably not more than half the volume which it possesses during the period of the rains.

In the exhilaration of our departure we had quite forgotten the disappointment of the morning, and had abandoned ourselves to the enjoyment of the novelty alike of our circumstances and the scenery. But our day's annoyances were not complete. After paddling for perhaps five miles, we came to where the banks had more firmness, and were a trifle higher than below, and where the canes and long grass gave way to a rank growth of palms; their broad leaves forming a roof impenetrable to the sun. Here, at a place where the undergrowth had been removed, and the trees rose like

gothic columns, with evergreen arches, covering cool, dark vistas, our boat was quietly thrust in shore, and we were astonished with preparations for another meal. We remonstrated, but it was of no use; all the bongos had stopped here from time immemorial, and Pedro told us, in broken English, that the *demonio* could not get the sailors by. And Pedro himself sat deliberately down on the *pineta*, and turning up his toes, began a grand hunt for *niguas*. Some of the men followed the example of the Patron, others lifted out the kettles, and still others built a fire.

Every bongo, on leaving the interior, takes on board a large number of plantains, not yet fully ripe, and which are therefore called *verdes*. These are detached from the stalk, "corded up" in the bow of the boat, and constitute the principal reliance of the men. A few, that are nearly or quite ripe, called *maduras*, are also taken on board for immediate use. Besides these, there is a box of jerked beef, or what the Americans ironically call *yard beef*, i. e. beef cut in long strips and dried in the sun. Some bottles of *manteca* (lard), or a quantity of kidney fat and a bag of rice are added, and then the substantial supplies for the voyage are complete. The cookery is very simple. Stakes are driven in the ground to support the kettle, in which is first put a portion of fat, next a layer of *platanos verdes* from which the skin has been stripped, then a layer of beef cut in small pieces, a calabash of rice, some salt, and so on until the kettle is filled. Water is poured over all, and the whole is thoroughly boiled. While this is going on, the men amuse themselves with roasting bits of meat on the ends of pointed sticks. Nothing can be wilder or more picturesque than a dozen naked, swarthy figures crouched around the fire, in the deep shadows of the forest, protecting their faces from the heat with their hands, and keeping up the while a most vociferous discussion, generally about the merits of this or that bongo, or upon some other subject of equal interest to themselves.

When the mess in the kettle is cooked, each one fills his calabash, and with his fingers or a cocoa-nut spoon disposes of it at his leisure. As the "yard beef" has always a most suspicious odor, I could bring myself to taste the contents of the kettle but once. I must do the marineros the justice to say that it was not an unsavory dish. It is always arranged to have half a kettle full of the compound over, to which the men help themselves at their pleasure.

Besides these common stores, every sailor has a private stock, consisting, generally, of a bag of *tiste*, (parched corn, ground with cacao and sugar,) which is mixed with water, making a nourishing and most delicious beverage. He has also a few cakes of *chancaca*, or, as he calls it, *dulce*, i. e., unrefined sugar, which he eats in its raw state. A few stalks of sugar-cane are almost always to be found stowed away amongst the freight, upon which the men entertain themselves after the anchor is cast for the night. In fact, when they are not sleeping or at the oars, they are eating or smoking, and are as loquacious as a flock of parrots. A stranger would suppose they were constantly on the verge of a general quarrel. Yet, like the *arrieros* of Mexico, these men are, with few exceptions, good-tempered, honest, and trustworthy, and have an *esprit de corps* amongst them which is carefully kept up. They are governed by certain conventional rules, which none dare violate; and their quarrels are generally referred to the decision of the older and more influential individuals of their own number.

It was nearly sunset when the meal was finished; the boat was pushed out in the stream, and we were once more on our way. We had now come to that part of the river where the long, broad reaches commence, and were moving slowly and almost noiselessly along in the shadow of the trees, on the tops of which the sunlight was shining, when suddenly, as if by a simultaneous impulse, the sweeps were raised, and each sailor reverently took off his hat,—the hour of the *oracion*

had come. The bowman commenced the evening chaunt, the chorus of which was taken up by the entire crew, with a precision, in respect to cadence and time, which could only result from long practice. There was certainly something impressive in the apparent devotion of these rude men, apart from the effect of the melody itself, caught up as it was by the echoes, and prolonged in the forest solitudes. Yet the impression was destroyed by one of those freaks in which the natives of this country seem to delight, and which constantly outrage the traveller's sense of propriety. No sooner was the chaunt concluded, than all hands gave a shout, and bending to the sweeps, pulled like madmen for a few minutes, and then as suddenly stopped again, and broke out in a paroxysm of laughter.

We afterwards frequently witnessed the same proceeding, but could never discover the reason for it, probably because there was no reason in the case. We came, in the end, to look upon it as a simple ebullition of animal feeling. The fit of laughter over, the men pulled steadily for a couple of hours, keeping time to a kind of round which was certainly not without a degree of melody, but which was chiefly acceptable because it required a full and rapid swing of the sweeps, and was therefore favorable to speed. We always applauded it, and when impatient of our slow progress, exercised our ingenuity to introduce it as frequently as possible without creating suspicion of the object. Our friend "Medio," however, sharper than the rest, detected us; but he was adroit enough to turn his wit to account, by exacting extra allowances of our *ardiente* as the reward of his silence.

It was long after dark when we came to anchor in the midst of the stream, at a point above the *gamalote* islands, which are always densely populated with mosquitoes. For this reason the bongos never stop over night near them, if it can be avoided. The sailors have also a fancy, whether well-founded or otherwise I am unprepared to say, that noise will

attract these annoying visitors. The sweeps are therefore pulled on board, and the anchor run out as silently as possible, and all conversation thereafter is carried on in a suppressed voice.

One night on the river is much like all others, and our first may be taken as an "average" example of our nocturnal experiences. The trunks of the party had been packed beneath the *chopa*, with principal reference to a level surface. Upon these were spread ponchos, blankets, and whatever might contribute to relieve the unyielding sub-stratum, while the carpet bags, and gutta-percha pouches were reserved for pillows. A stout cord was fastened close under the roof, over which were hung a change of linen, and a few necessary articles of dress. Here too were slung, in easy reach, and with special regard to convenience in case of necessity, our guns, pistols, and bowie knives, with the requisite ammunition. A few books and materials for drawing were bestowed on a shelf beneath the *pineta*, where also Ben had established the commissariat department,—one which, above all others, is not to be neglected in ascending the San Juan. It was barely possible to sit erect beneath the *chopa;* and excepting the narrow space between it and the first bench, there was no room to stand, unless we encroached upon the Patron's *pineta*,—which, it may be mentioned, we were not scrupulous in doing. Here, notwithstanding the heat of the sun, I passed most of the day, to the thorough embrowning of every exposed part of the person. The thatched *chopa*, a paradise for insects, was covered with raw hides, and two immense ones were fixed at either end. When it rained, these were let down, converting the interior into a kind of oven, intolerably close and hot. After one or two trials, we preferred to take the risk of getting wet to that of being suffocated by the heat, and would not allow them to be lowered. In fact, after repeated wettings, their stench became unendurable, and we had them removed entirely, much to

the astonishment of Pedro, who really seemed to relish the smell of putrescent hides! In the first class bongos, which have board roofs, with close joints, this annoyance is obviated. In these the traveller also finds a refuge on the top of the *chopa*, from the discomforts of the interior.

We sat up late, watching the men, who gathered in a group near the bow of the boat, each with a cigar in his mouth, a handkerchief bound round his head, and a blanket thrown over his shoulders. There they sat for hours, keeping up conversation in a low tone, and with every appearance of great earnestness. Finally, however, they broke off one by one, and stretched themselves each on his own hard bench. Ben, too, who had been with Fremont across the continent, had travelled all over Mexico, and was consequently a philosopher after his way, took to the only vacant bench, while Pedro coiled himself in a heap on the *pimeta*. The night was threatening, no stars were visible, and we could only discern the dark water sweeping past us, by the light of the "fire-fly lamps." An alligator occasionally plunged heavily in the stream, but excepting the water rippling under the bow, all else was silent.

It was past midnight when the drops of an approaching shower warned us to seek the shelter of the *chopa*. We found our quarters sufficiently narrow, and the trunks, spite of ponchos and blankets, portentously hard. Yet, thanks to former experiences, I was soon asleep, and slumbered soundly until morning. A few straggling mosquitos, however, had disturbed my companions, who were up long before me, unrefreshed and complaining. Although it was hardly sunrise, we had been moving for two or three hours, and were past the Tauro mouth of the San Juan, and approaching the point of divergence of the Colorado. And although the banks were little if any higher than before, yet the feathery palms, of which I have spoken, were interspersed with other varieties of trees, some of which were of large

size, and draped all over with vines, that hung in rich festoons over the water. Birds of varied plumage glanced in and out of the forest, and cranes and other water-fowl paced soberly along the sand bars, or flew lazily up the stream as we approached. Occasionally a pair of green macaws,—the macaw is never seen except in couples,—fluttered slowly over our heads, almost deafening us with their discordant notes. The air was cool and fresh, reminding me of a morning in June at home, and I experienced a degree of exhilaration in performing my morning ablutions which completely put to flight all my previously conceived notions of tropical lassitude. Mists lurked here and there in the bends of the river, and in shadowy nooks, but they gradually dispersed, and at eight o'clock, when the boat was moored under the shadow of a gigantic tree, the sun shone brilliantly upon a scene as luxuriant as the imagination can portray. Ben boiled his coffee at the sailors' fire, and we made our first breakfast on the river with a degree of satisfaction which, even at this distance of time, it is pleasant to recall.

At ten o'clock we were once more in motion, and shortly after came to the Colorado. At the point of junction, fourteen miles above the port, there is a broad reach, and the river at once assumes a more majestic character. As I have already said, the Colorado carries off fully two-thirds of the water of the river, so that no adequate idea of its size and beauty can be formed until the traveller has reached the main body of the stream. Here the banks become higher; the low islands disappear; and the river is walled in by a dense forest. To avoid the strength of the current, the boat was kept close along the shore, and the long vines, loaded with gay and fragrant flowers, trailed over the *chopa* as it passed beneath them. Brilliantly-colored birds sparkled in the cool, green coverts, and, for the first time, we saw the ugly iguanas looking curiously down upon us from the pro-

jecting limbs of the trees. They fully answered to Ben's description of very ugly snakes, which Nature, after forming the head and tail, had neglected, until it was too late, to roll into shape, giving them afterwards four legs, by way of compensation for her oversight. They abound in Central America, and are to be met with in almost every locality, but are particularly abundant on the San Juan, where they attain to great size. They are of a variety of colors, and the different species (of which there appear to be several,) are distinguished by other peculiarities. Hundreds of small size and bright-green color might be seen clinging to every little branch, or sunning themselves on every old trunk which projected into the stream. When disturbed, they would dash for the shore with great swiftness, literally walking the water. We shot many in our passage, but recovered few, as they are very tenacious of life, and often cling to the trees after they are killed. They are esteemed delicious food, and are eagerly sought by the marineros. I could never bring myself to taste them, although the flesh, after being cooked, looked sufficiently delicate and inviting. I do not know how close an anatomical affinity they sustain to the alligator, but their jaws and teeth are much the same, in miniature, and like the alligator they take to the water if closely pressed, when there is no hole or tree in which to find refuge. Their general ugliness is unnecessarily heightened by a kind of crest or integument which runs along the back, from the root of the neck to the tail, and which is elevated when the animal is frightened or enraged. I never overcame my aversion to these reptiles, although I afterwards brought myself to tolerate a colony of them, which had taken up their quarters in the adobe walls of my court-yard in Leon.

During the day we passed an island near the place of divergence of the Juanillo, upon which an adventurous Nicaraguan from the interior had established a plantain-walk. His house was nothing more than a shed, and under it was

strung a couple of hammocks, in which the master and his spouse swung slowly to and fro, complete impersonations of idleness and ease. A couple of naked children were rolling in the sand of the shore, upon which was drawn up a graceful canoe, the whole constituting a picture of primitive simplicity, to be found nowhere except under the tropics. Our men shouted, and were answered by a couple of wolfish-looking dogs, while the children scampered for the hut in apparent alarm, but neither father nor mother took the trouble to rise. Why should they?

That night we came to anchor a few miles below the mouth of the Serapiqui, and next morning passed the spot where the Nicaraguan boatmen had made their stand against the English, after the capture of San Juan. The position was well chosen, at the head of a long reach, where the river takes a sudden bend, and where the hills, for the first time, come down to the water. Here they had cleared off the trees, and with their trunks had constructed a hasty breastwork, fronting the river. This rude fortification was manned by about one hundred and twenty men, some armed with old fowling-pieces, but others having no weapons except their machetes. They had also one or two rusty pieces of artillery, which none of them knew how to use, and with these preparations they awaited the ascent of the English. The latter, made up of three hundred picked men, from the vessels-of-war "Alarm" and "Vixen," in launches carrying guns at their bows, reached this place on the 12th of February, 1848. There could, of course, be but one result. The Nicaraguans were dislodged, with the loss of some fifteen or twenty killed, and about the same number wounded. With an equal force and equipments, the issue might have been different. The English commander reported his loss at two killed and fourteen wounded, but the Nicaraguans protest that it was four or five times that number, and the men were anxious to convince us of the fact by opening the grave where the English

had buried their dead. We did not, however, take interest enough in the matter to stop, and were consequently obliged to keep our doubts, if we entertained any, to ourselves. Certain it is, that the British commander did not include in his statement the loss of Mr. Walker, "British Consul and General Agent on the Mosquito shore," who, with a boon companion, was reported "accidentally drowned." Walker was the most effective agent in getting up the attack on San Juan, and in organizing the British pretensions, being always at hand to manufacture "historical evidence," and his death almost consoled the Nicaraguans for their defeat. Captain Loch was, I believe, promoted for his gallantry, in what the Admiralty termed "the brilliant action of Serapiqui." The whole affair was a wanton act of aggression, and worthy only of pirates. No wonder the sailors hissed "death to the English" through their closed teeth, as we swept past the scene of their humiliation.

The Serapiqui is a large stream, taking its rise at the base of the great volcano of Cartago, in Costa Rica. It is navigable by bongos for the distance of thirty miles, and is one of the avenues through which the inhabited part of Costa Rica is reached from the coast. Flowing wholly to the eastward of the mountains, where the rains fall during the entire year, the volume of water in this river is very constant. It is probably the largest tributary of the San Juan. There is a small spot of ground partially cleared at its mouth, where some families had established themselves previous to the English troubles. Upon the seizure of San Juan, they abandoned their plantations and moved into the interior; and so rapid is the progress of vegetation and the course of decay, that their rude dwellings have entirely disappeared, and no trace of former occupation is left, except a few plantain trees struggling above the rank grass and undergrowth which have since sprung up.

We passed the mouth of the Rio San Francisco during the

afternoon, and spent our third night above "Remolino Grande," where rock first appears in the bank of the river. This name is given to a whirlpool caused by the abrupt turning of the stream, which is here somewhat confined by its unyielding banks. Up to this time we had accomplished only about thirty miles of our voyage, and the easiest portion, for the current above is stronger, and we were now approaching the rapids, where progress against the stream is slow and difficult.

VIEW ON THE SAN JUAN; THE HILLS OF SAN CARLOS.

The next day we came to where the banks of the river were higher than we had yet seen, and where the scenery became, if possible, more beautiful than before. I never wearied in gazing upon the dense masses of foliage that literally embowered the river, and which, in the slanting light, produced those magical effects of shadow on water,

which the painter delights to represent. We this day caught occasional glimpses of the high hills at the junction of the San Carlos with the San Juan, where the latter breaks through the barrier which shuts in the great basin of Nicaragua on the east. The afternoon was rainy, and heavy thunder-storms swept over as we approached the highlands. The marineros, nevertheless, seemed to relish the change, and pulled at the oars with renewed vigor. Just before sunset, however, the rains stopped, and as the atmosphere cleared, we found that we were at the mouth of the San Carlos, a broad and long stream, which, like the Serapiqui, takes its rise at the base of the volcano of Cartago, in Costa Rica. This stream, Pedro informed us, brings down immense quantities of volcanic sand, ashes, and decomposed scoriaceous materials, which it deposits at various points, forming what appear to be smooth sand-bars. The material, however, is so soft and yielding, that whoever ventures upon it, sinks at once to his middle. Near the mouth of this stream is one of the largest and most beautiful islands to be found in the river; and, as we approached, two manitees, feeding amongst the grass on its shores, plunged their unwieldy bulks heavily in the water. Above the island is the pass in the hills to which I have alluded, and which reminded me of the entrance of the highlands of the Hudson from the north. The mountains, upon the left, come boldly down to the water, and their tops were wrapped in clouds, lending to them the grandeur which in some degree always pertains to the vague and unknown. Here the river is much compressed, and the current deep and strong, requiring the utmost exertions of the men to carry the boat against it. With darkness came the rain again, and thunder-storm after thunder-storm rolled heavily along the heights of San Carlos. At times the mountain summits were literally wrapped in fire, and they seemed trembling to their very bases under the reverberating peals of thunder. None but those who have witnessed a tropical

storm can fully appreciate Byron's magnificent description, or understand the terrible majesty of this elemental warfare. I slept but little that night, and shall never forget the excitement, novel and pleasurable, which I experienced under these new and singular circumstances. Towards morning I fell asleep, and was only awakened by Ben's call to breakfast,—broiled ham, fried plantains, bread, and chocolate.

From the mouth of the San Carlos to the first rapids, those of Machuca, the river seemed to increase in beauty. The banks were higher and firmer, and hills appeared, at intervals, in the background. The country here is evidently one well adapted for cultivation, and must ultimately become populated. At present a few Melchora Indians roam through its forests, deriving their support from the river and its tributaries. They are generally very shy of the boats, and retire upon their approach. One or two families, however, have overcome their fears, and from their communication with the boatmen, have picked up sufficient Spanish to enable them to carry on a broken conversation. Two of these Indians, an old man and a boy, came to us in their canoe, and offered some dried pieces of a large fish, which abounds in the rivers, called *Savalo*, in exchange for bread, plantains, or any other articles which the sailors might have to spare. Both were naked, and the old man was wrinkled and drooping, his gray hair matted on his head and shoulders, while the boy was lithe, bright, and sleek as a young panther. They looked curiously at our party, and frequently exclaimed, *blancos*, *blancos*, whites, whites! I gave them some fish-hooks, in return for which they insisted on my receiving a portion of their dried fish. Pedro endeavored to make them understand that we were from "El Norte,"—but they knew nothing of El Norte, and only shook their heads. They stand in great dread of firearms, as they have been wantonly shot at by passengers ascending or descending the river. And when they glanced under the *chopa*, and caught

sight of our armament, they pushed off hastily into the stream; the boy standing in the bow, and striking with his paddle alternately on one side and the other, while the old man guided the boat. I did not succeed in procuring any words of the vocabulary of these Indians, but they are undoubtedly of Carib stock.

The rapids of Machuca, which derive their name from Capt. Diego Machuca, who explored this river in 1529, are the first and most formidable on the river. The bed of the stream, for nearly a mile, is full of rocks and stones, between which the water rushes with great force. The boats, in ascending, are kept close in the right shore, and are poled up, slowly and with great difficulty. In descending they are often kept near the middle of the stream, down which they come, glancing between the rocks with the rapidity of an arrow. In descending, in June, 1850, my bongo, which obeyed the rudder very imperfectly, struck with immense force, and got jammed between the rocks, with its broadside to the current, where we remained for thirty hours, until literally dragged out by the united crews of six boats, after half a day of incessant labor. The boat was of great strength, or it must inevitably have gone to pieces. Such accidents are not of frequent occurrence, as the marineros are extremely expert in the management of their bongos. We were four hours in passing the Machuca. From thence to the Rapides del Mico and los Valos, the current is strong, but the channel is free. These rapids are short, and less difficult to overcome than those of Machuca. It is nevertheless a slow and laborious task to make their ascent; and until they are improved by art, they must always be great obstacles to the navigation of the river. At present the steamer "Orus," sent out by the "American Atlantic and Pacific Ship Canal Company," lies a wreck on the rocks of Machuca.

On the morning of the 17th of June we made the Rapides del Castillo, commanded by the ancient fort of San Juan,

now called the Castillo Viejo, "Old Castle," We had looked forward to our arrival here with great interest, not less on account of the historical associations connected with the place, than because, from hence to the lake, the passage is quick and comparatively easy. The morning was wet and gloomy, and altogether the most forbidding of any we had yet encountered, hardly excepting that on which we had made the coast, in the execrable little Francis. I nevertheless put on my water-proof poncho, and took my seat by the side of Pedro, on the *pineta*.

A league below the fort we passed the island of Bartola, on which, beneath the dense verdure, we could discover traces of the ancient advance works of the fortress. It was here the English buried their men who were killed, or died of disease during the memorable but fruitless expedition against Nicaragua, in 1780, under the command of Colonel Polson, and Captain, afterwards Lord, Nelson. This island was carried by Nelson, who here distinguished himself for the first time.

Passing the island, we came to a broad and beautiful reach in the river, at the head of which, upon a commanding eminence, rise the walls of the Castillo. The hill resembles that of Chapultepec, near Mexico; is equally bold, and has been scarped to the steepness and regularity of the pyramids. The sides are now covered with bushes, and matted over with vines, but the walls still frown gloomily above the mass of verdure. At the foot, and nearly on the level of the water, is what is called the "*Platforma*," where were the ancient water-batteries. It is now occupied by a few thatched houses,—the quarters of a small garrison kept here by the Nicaraguan government, as an evidence of occupancy, and to assist boats in passing the rapids of the Castle, which, although narrow, are very powerful, and better deserving the name of falls than rapids. Here the boats have to be "tracked up" by sheer force; and it is usual for all pas-

sengers to land, and to lighten the boat in every way possible. It is often necessary to take out a considerable part of the freight, or to wait for the arrival of another boat, so as to join forces in making the ascent.

Arrived in the eddy below the "Platforma," M. and myself bestrid the shoulders of our men, and were deposited on shore. We started at once for the castle, by a path which the garrison, under express orders from the government, kept clear of bushes. I glanced into one of the huts as I passed, but saw nothing beyond a very pretty yellow girl, swinging slowly to and fro in a hammock, with one naked leg hanging indolently over the side. She threw aside her long black curls, but, without changing her position, exclaimed, "Adios, California!" A party of outward-bound Californians had spent a number of days here, a few weeks previously, and had evidently been on familiar terms with the señora.

The ascent to the castle was very steep and slippery from the rain, which had fallen uninterruptedly all the morning. A wide and deep fosse ran around the brow of the hill, with perpendicular escarpments, which we crossed on a narrow causeway, evidently of comparatively recent construction. If the work seemed imposing from the river, how much more impressive was it when we looked down from its walls into two tiers of chambers sunk in the rock, and in which tall trees were growing, their topmost branches scarcely reaching to the level on which we stood. We descended by a bomb-proof stairway to the bottom, into what had been the magazine, and into the rocky chambers where the ancient garrison had been quartered, more than ever impressed with the daring and energy of those iron men who had subverted the empires of Montezuma and the Incas; and who, within fifty years after the Discovery, had traversed every part of the continent, from California to La Plata. We went into the chapel; there was the niche in which had stood the

cross, and an effigy of "Nuestra Madre de Mercedes," "Our Mother of Mercy," and beneath it was the font for holding the holy water. By a passage, protected from shot, we ascended to what is called the tower,—a solid mass of masonry, rising some sixty feet above the lower works, with a parapet embrasured for twelve guns, and now almost as solid and substantial as if built but yesterday. In this climate, where the great corrodent, frost, never reaches, the durability of good masonry is almost incredible. The floor of the tower, with the exception of the centre, which had been broken, probably under the impression that treasure might be concealed there, was as smooth and firm as ever. Upon the western side of the work was the main entrance, the massive buttresses which supported the drawbridge, and a glacis, subsiding to a terrace, which had been the parade ground, garden, and cemetery of the garrison. All around the work on this side was an arched way, and immediately facing the draw, and firmly imbedded in the masonry of the tower, a block of stone, bearing a long inscription, but too much defaced to be perfectly made out. Its purport, however, is, that the castle was *reconstructed*, under royal orders, by the Governor Intendant of Nicaragua and Costa Rica, for the defence of the river, in 1747. How long previously works had existed there is now unknown,—probably from the middle of the sixteenth century. Great but ineffective efforts had evidently been made to dislodge or remove this stone, which bears too potential evidence against the pretensions of one "J. Bull," to be regarded with favor by any in his interest.

On the north-western bastion of the fort and looking both up and down the river, stands a sentinel's box of stone, and close beside it, firmly fixed in the walls, the stump of the ancient flag-staff. Within the box were yet to be seen the grooves which the muskets of the sentinels had worn in the stone. We thrust our heads through the windows, but saw nothing except Pedro and his men, some to their shoulders

in the water, pushing up "La Granadina," and others tugging at the rope attached to her bows.

This fort was captured by the English on the 29th of April, 1780. The plan of the expedition was formed by Gen. Sir John Dalling,[1] and had for its object to get possession of Lake Nicaragua, and the cities of Leon and Granada, and thus to cut

SENTINEL'S BOX AT THE CASTILLO VIEJO.

off communication between the northern and southern Spanish possessions in America. The land forces were commanded by Colonel Polson, under whose orders Captain Nelson, then in command of the ship "Hinchinbrook," acted. The Span-

[1] Clark and McArthur's Life of Nelson, vol. p. 32.

ish garrison consisted of two hundred and twenty-eight men, under the command of Juan de Ayssa. Nothwithstanding the overwhelmingly superior force of the English, the siege was a protracted one. The castle was finally brought to terms by the English obtaining possession of a hill commanding it in the rear. By the terms of capitulation, "in consideration of the gallant defence of the fort," the garrison was permitted to march out with colors flying, drums beating, with lighted matches, muskets and sidearms, and to be furnished with vessels and provisions to convey them to any port of Spain in America which might be agreed upon.[1] This triumph was dearly purchased, and was productive of no good results. The entire expedition was a failure, and is passed over very lightly in the English annals. Of the two hundred men comprising the crew of Nelson's vessel, but ten survived the expedition, and he himself narrowly escaped death. In January, 1781, the English abandoned the castle, and withdrew to Jamaica. Collingwood apologises for the failure of the expedition, on the ground that "it was formed without a sufficient knowledge of the country, and presented difficulties not to be surmounted by human skill and perseverance. It was dangerous to proceed on the river, from the rapidity of the current, and the numerous falls over rocks which intercepted the navigation; the climate, too, was deadly, and no constitution could resist its effects."[2]

Some conception of the difficulty of ascending the rapids of the Castillo may be formed from the fact, that it required the utmost exertion of our men, for nearly three hours, to get "La Granadina," with no freight, past them. The boat once up, the crew made breakfast; and after glancing over the list of the Californian party, who had not neglected to

[1] Beatson's "Naval and Military Memoirs of Great Britain," vol. v. p. 97, and vol. vi. p. 230.

[2] Memoirs, 5th ed., vol. i. p. 10.

inscribe their names conspicuously on the walls of the fort, we descended, thoroughly drenched with the rain. I had the toothache, and M—— the rheumatism, for a week, "by way of improvement" on our visit to the Castillo. The commandant of the garrison, having found out who were his visitors, was there to receive us; and from him we learned that we were expected in the interior, and that instructions had gone out from the government to all its officers to treat us with every possible respect, and to afford every facility to our progress. He had accordingly come to put himself "at our disposition." Being hungry, the colloquy took place, on the part of the representative of El Norte, in the intervals which could be spared from Ben's broiled ham and coffee. For an appetite, and a corresponding contempt for etiquette, I recommend a three hours' visit to the Castillo Viejo, before breakfast.

A few miles above the Rapides del Castillo, are the Rapides del Toro, which, however, are not strong, and are easily passed. Beyond these the river becomes of very nearly uniform width, and flows with a deep, regular current. This part of the stream is, in fact, a kind of estuary, or extension of Lake Nicaragua. The banks are low, and the feathery palm again appears lining the shores. The whole country on both shores, for a long distance back, is swampy, and in parts covered with water in the rainy season. Quite a number of sluggish streams, nevertheless, flow through it, whose names indicate the character of their banks and the surrounding country. There is the Rio Palo del Arco, "Arched with Trees;" the Rio Poco Sol, "Little Sun;" Rio Roblito, Mosquito, etc.

It was on the morning of the sixth day after our departure from San Juan, that the boat was pushed in to the low bank for breakfast, at a point but five miles below the Fort of San Carlos, situated at the head of the river, on the lake. Myriads of water-fowl lined the shores, and never so much as

moved from the trees above us while we breakfasted. Among them Ben discovered a majestic black eagle, which he shot. The bird fell near us, but as we approached him, he threw himself on his back, with open beak, fierce eye, and threatening talons, defiant to the last. I would have given more than one hard dollar to have undone the wanton act, and sent the proud bird unharmed once more, free to his native mountains.

Although the novelty of our ascent, (ninety miles in six days, think of that, ye voyagers on the Hudson or our western rivers!) had in some degree compensated for its tediousness, and we had "put in" the time rather agreeably than otherwise, yet it was with unqualified satisfaction that we learned that we had nearly passed the river. We were impatient to look upon the great lake, of which the world had heard so much but knew so little, and thought our progress, over the intervening five miles, unaccountably slow. At eleven o'clock, however, upon passing a large island, the river opened in a broad reach, and we saw before us the waters of the lake. A commanding eminence, cleared of trees, and surmounted by a few houses and a flag-staff, rose where the lake terminated and the river commenced. The men seemed hardly less pleased than ourselves; but after pulling with great energy for a few minutes, suddenly stopped, and simultaneously plunged overboard. We had become accustomed to all sorts of fantastic freaks, and contented ourselves with looking on without asking questions. After paddling about for a while, they clambered aboard, and then commenced a grand hunt for the clothes which had been so summarily laid aside when we left San Juan. These were dragged to light from all conceivable out-of-the-way nooks, and directly the whole crew was dressed in clean attire, which made us quite ashamed of our soiled garments. The economy, not to say the convenience, of going naked, for the purpose of keeping one's clothes clean, was never more

manifest. Pedro insisted on having the flag unfurled from the *pineta*, and before we had got within a mile from the fort, produced his conch-shell, and blew an awful blast upon it. A few figures appeared on the hill near the flag-staff, and directly the blue and white flag of Nicaragua, with an oval in the centre, containing three volcanoes and the rising sun, was run to its top. The roll of a drum, and the glancing of polished arms in the sun, showed us that we were recognized, and made us more than ever ashamed of our shabby exteriors. But what was to be done? Our trunks were wedged immovably beneath us, and if once dragged out, to our future eminent discomfort, where and how could we make our toilet? Besides we had no time for operations, the men were pulling with all their force, and we were rapidly nearing the fort. M ——, with one foot wrapped in a napkin, (a nigua had unluckily escaped detection at San Juan,) proposed that we should throw our gutta percha ponchos over our garments, and decline going on shore, as the only feasible means of keeping up appearances. This was hardly agreed upon and done, before "La Granadina" dashed round the point, and up to the landing of San Carlos. The commandante and his subordinates, in full uniform, the officers of the Aduana or Custom-House, and a large deputation of the people, were all on the beach to receive us, which they did with a storm of vivas, and before we had well recovered from our surprise, a canoe was placed alongside, and the first Alcalde desired us to land. We were, of course, extremely obliged, but preferred to remain on board, as we should proceed at once. Pedro spoiled this by saying that he must ship his masts here, and that his men must eat, and we knew this double performance was good for five or six hours. So, trusting to the impenetrable ponchos, we got into the canoe, and were guided to the shore. We did not feel particularly imposing while receiving the congratulations of our new friends, and at once accepted the proposal of the commandante

to go to his house, which was airily situated at the top of the hill, and within what had been part of the ancient defences. Here about twenty-five men, composing the garrison, were drawn up, who presented arms as we passed.

The commandante's house, like all the rest, was composed of a substantial frame-work of timber; the sides were made of canes netted together, the roof was thatched, and the floor the natural earth, excepting that of one room, which was paved with brick tiles. A number of pigeons were billing and cooing in a snug place under the eaves; an exceedingly quiet hen sat brooding beneath a table in one corner of the principal room, and through an opening in a cloth partition, we caught sight of a pretty bed, with snow-white curtains, with a gaudy palm mattress spread in front, on which a full-sized, voluptuously-shaped young woman was playfully tossing a naked infant, some six months old, which crowed in very glee, while a young, clumsy little dog leaped around the child, and barked asthmatically from sheer sympathy. The cool wind rustled amidst the palm thatch, while the sunlight stole in checkered mazes between the woven canes. Altogether the scene, combining so much of simplicity and novelty, impressed me more than any I had ever witnessed. I forgot, for the moment, that I was keeping my host standing, and that the servant was holding the hammock, which invariably swings in every dwelling, open for my reception. I apologized, while the little garrison, bringing their arms to shoulder with a clang, defiled before the door, the officer saluting us in a most formal manner. Our host was anxious to have us remove our ponchos, and seemed puzzled at our pertinacity in keeping them on. By-and-by, however, they became insupportably hot, and, as the best way of getting out of them and a scrape together, I frankly told the whole story of our dilemma, and dragged off the abominations. I fear "El Norte" did not cut a very imposing figure, under the close scrutiny to which he was subjected.

The commandante insisted on our dining, and we had no indisposition to do him the favor,—particularly as we had ocular demonstration, in the flitches of dried meat, the luscious-looking plantains, and other edibles, which hung from the rafters, (not less than in the person of our rotund host, whose uniform was strained to the utmost limit in the buttoning,) that his larder was well supplied, and the wants of the inner man properly cared for. Preparatory to taking a walk through the little village, which the commandante told us was "muy pobre," very poor, we all took a drop of brandy, to his toast complimentary to us, and "to the President of the United States," "El Esclarecido General Taylor."

I have said that the house of the commandante stood within the ancient outworks of the strong fort of San Carlos. The rocky summit of the point had been smoothed, and the slopes scarped, so as to render ascent difficult, if not impracticable. A battery, which raked the river for a mile, once existed here; but the few rusty guns which remain are more formidable in appearance than in fact. The fort itself, which formerly communicated with this battery by a covered way, stands some distance back, on the highest point of land in the vicinity. It was very strong, but is now in complete decay, and covered with large trees and bushes, so as to be entirely hidden from view. Within it we observed many very heavy pieces of ordnance, some of which were cast in Manilla, and trees were growing up through heaps of rusty cannon-balls. The position completely commands the entrance to the lake, and from the nature of the surrounding country must have been nearly impregnable.

The present town of San Carlos consists only of some twenty cane or board houses, occupied chiefly by the officers of the customs, and the soldiers with their families. Since the seizure of San Juan, the customs on goods entering the State, via that port, have been collected here. This circumstance, together with the fact that all the boats passing

through the river stop here to unship or resume their masts, and renew their supplies, makes it a place of some importance. It is delightfully situated, and from the corridor of the commandant's house, one of the finest views in the world is presented to the traveller. The broad lake spreads like a mirror in front, its opposite shores marked by the regular volcanic peaks of Orosi, Madeira, and Ometepec, capped with clouds, which rise dim and blue in the distance. Nearer lie the fairy-looking islands of La Boqueta, golden under the tropical sun, while in the foreground the emerald shores stretch their wide arms on either side, a fit setting for so gorgeous a picture. Immediately opposite the town, flowing into the lake, within a few rods of where the San Juan flows out, is the Rio Frio, Cold River, whence the water for consumption in the village is brought. The sources of this river have never been explored, but they are supposed to be somewhere in the mountains of Costa Rica.

A tribe of Indians, called the *Guatosos*, who hold no communication with the whites, inhabit its banks, and resist all attempts at exploration. The late commandante of the fort, Don Trinidad Salazar, endeavored to ascend the stream a few months previously to our arrival; but on the sixth day he was interrupted by a large body of Indians, and after a sharp contest, in which he was severely wounded, was compelled to retreat. He subsequently gave me a glowing account of the beauty of the stream, and the fertility and luxuriance of its shores. It has a depth of two fathoms of water, for a distance of forty miles above its mouth, and from his account, it could probably be navigated by steamers for twice that distance. The fact that a stream of this size, and the wide extent of country around it, are wholly unknown, would seem to show how much remains to be discovered in Central America, and how broad a field it holds out for enterprise and adventure.

Between the mouth of the Rio Frio and the source of the

San Juan, is a broad sand-bar, which seems to be a grand sunning-ground for alligators. Hundreds congregate here during the dry season, when the bar is exposed, and they appear to have an exceedingly good time of it. We could distinctly see their ugly, black carcasses from the commandante's corridor; and our host showed us a basket of their teeth, which he had picked up on the bar, and which were more pleasant to contemplate in that condition, than when adorning the jaws of the living reptile.

A French officer, in the Nicaraguan service, (who was foolish enough to take part against the government in an attempted revolution shortly after, and got shot for his pains,) gave us some facts relative to alligators, of which we were previously ignorant. Those most satisfactory were that they occasionally have terrible fights among themselves, in which many get killed, and that the males destroy all the eggs of the females they can find, besides, Saturn-like, eating up all the young ones they can catch. We only regretted that they were not more successful in their amiable attentions to their own progeny.

THE IGUANA.

CHAPTER IV.

SAN CARLOS—DINNER AT THE COMMANDANTE'S—INTRODUCTION TO "TORTILLAS Y FRIJOLES"—A SIESTA—NEWS OF THE ATTEMPTED REVOLUTION—ANTICIPATING EVENTS, AND WHAT HAPPENED TO THE COMMANDANTE AFTER WE LEFT—DEPARTURE UNDER A MILITARY SALVO—VIEW OF SAN CARLOS FROM THE LAKE—LAKE NAVIGATION—CARD PLAYING—GORGEOUS SUNSET—A MIDNIGHT STORM—SAN MIGUELITO, AND THE "BATH OF THE NAIDES"—PRIMITIVE SIMPLICITY—A DAY ON THE LAKE—"EL PEDERNAL"—A BATH WITH ALLIGATORS—AN "EMPACHO"—A TRIAL AT MEDICINE, AND GREAT SUCCESS—SECOND NIGHT ON THE LAKE—THE VOLCANOES OF MOMOBACHO, OMETEPEC, AND MADEIRA—VOLCANIC SCENERY—THE COAST OF CHONTALES—THE CREW ON POLITICS—"TIMBUCOS" AND "CALANDRACAS," OR A GLANCE AT PARTY DIVISIONS—ARRIVAL AT "LOS CORALES"—SOME ACCOUNT OF THEM—ALARMING NEWS—A COUNCIL OF WAR—FAITH IN THE UNITED STATES FLAG—THE ISLAND OF CUBI—MORE NEWS, AND A RETURN OF THE "EMPACHO"—DISTANT VIEW OF GRANADA—MAKING A TOILETTE—BEES—ARRIVAL AT THE RUINED FORT OF GRANADA—HOW THEY LAND THERE—SENSATION AMONGST THE SPECTATORS—ENTRANCE TO THE CITY—THE ABANDONED CONVENT OF SAN FRANCISCO—THE HOUSES OF THE INHABITANTS—FIRST IMPRESSIONS—SOLDIERS AND BARRICADES—THRONGED STREETS—SENOR DON FREDERICO DERBYSHIRE—"OUR HOST"—A WELCOME—OFFICIAL COURTESIES—OUR QUARTERS—FIRST NIGHT IN GRANADA.

Two hours sufficed to exhaust the lions of San Carlos, including the arsenal, which was a cane hut, with a quantity of powder in kegs, piled in the middle and covered with hides: two pieces of artillery, and a hundred stand of arms, over all of which a single sentinel kept watch, and the public warehouse or *bodega*, which was nothing more than a great shed, with convenient hammocks for its idle guardians,—we saw all these before two o'clock, at which hour dinner was

served in the commandante's house. The table-cloth was unimpeachably white, and the service altogether neat and ample. It was clearly the intention of our host to do his best; even the pigeons seemed impressed with the idea that something extraordinary was going on, and the hen in the corner was nervous with excitement in view of the display. All the juvenile population of the place, if possible still more airily dressed than the urchins at San Juan, crowded round the doors, (they had followed us, at a distance, during our peregrinations), and regarded the whole affair with evident admiration. A number of their seniors, comprising the more respectable part of the inhabitants, arrayed for the occasion, in snow-white shirts and pantaloons, each with white buck-skin shoes, and a red sash, now made their appearance, and were collectively and individually introduced, to the renewal of our mortification on the score of dress.

We sat down at the table, which was placed so as to give me the seat of honor in the hammock, while the commandante and his lieutenant, took, respectively, the head and foot. They declined to eat, devoting themselves wholly to supplying their guests. This, we afterwards learned, was Nicaraguan etiquette, when special distinction was intended to be conveyed. We were now, for the first time, introduced to the eternal *tortilla* and the omnipresent *frijoles*, to say nothing of the endless variety of *dulces* (sweetmeats), for which all Spanish America is famous. We commenced with beef, culminated over chicken, and finished with oranges, bananas, coffee, and cigars; with a pleasant stomachic conviction that good dinners were not incompatible with cane-huts, brooding hens in the corners, and amative pigeons under the eaves! We were anxious to see the señorita, of whom we had had a glimpse on our arrival, and whose low, laughing voice we occasionally heard through the cloth partition; but this was a delicate point, which we were cautious in touching upon, since M—— had found out that the commandante was a

bachelor. Ah, commandante! I may have been mistaken, but I feel very sure it was a large black eye which I caught merry glances of through a small rent in that cloth partition!

A siesta was strongly commended to us after dinner, and hammocks were strung for the whole party. It was indispensable, our host told us, in this climate, and he wondered how it could be omitted in El Norte. Life, in his opinion, without a siesta after dinner, must soon become a wearisome affair,—and he quoted some verses from a native poet which were conclusive on the subject; so we yielded, and lay down; the people left, the doors were closed, and all was silent—even the pigeons were still. Two hours passed in a dreamy, pleasurable way, with just enough of consciousness to enjoy the mingled sensation of novelty and ease, when Ben came to apprise us that the boat was ready, and the crew on board. Our host pressed us to stay until the next morning, but the wind and weather were fair; and, although the temptation was strong, we adhered to our first intentions, and were deaf to argument. Before leaving, I inquired about the revolution of which we had heard so much at San Juan, but got no very satisfactory information. There had been an "escaramúza," a scrimmage, at Granada, and a lawless, reckless fellow, under proscription for murder, named Somoza, had collected together a party of adherents, and sacked the city of Rivas or Nicaragua. The commandante was certain that peace and order were by this time restored; but if they were not, our arrival would certainly produce quiet. The commandante hardly thought that the same robber chief, of whom he spoke so lightly, would pay him a visit within a fortnight, and carry him off a prisoner! But so it proved to be; and although our commandante effected his escape, at imminent peril, through a wilderness, unarmed and alone, yet he was suspected of cowardice, imprisoned, and court-martialed. He came out safely, however, a shade less rotund perhaps, "a wiser if not a better man;" and before I

left the country I had the satisfaction of seeing him reinstated at the fort, fat, happy, and hospitable as ever. The dark-eyed señorita was there too.

At five o'clock we embarked, for the first time, on Lake Nicaragua. The people all came to bid us good-bye; and one old man insisted upon a parting embrace. Like the prophet of old, he said he was now ready to die, for he knew that his country was safe beneath the guardianship of the Republic of the North. We pushed off under a torrent of *vivas*, and a *feu de joie* was fired by the little garrison, which Ben efficiently returned with his double-barrelled gun, while Pedro blew another nerve-cracking blast on his conch—that awful conch! The view of San Carlos, from the lake, was picturesque in the extreme, and the accompanying sketch of it will be sufficiently curious twenty years hence, when it shall have become, as it inevitably will, a large and important town. Already a steamer plies regularly between San Carlos and Granada; and the alligators, disturbed in their slumbers on the sand-bar, by its plashing wheels and noisy engine, are meditating a grand migration into the country of the Guatosos.

The faintest of all zephyrs was dying away on the lake when we started, yet we had not gone half a mile before the oars were drawn aboard, and a huge triangular sail spread from the newly-rigged mast. The breeze was hardly strong enough to fill it; and the boat dawdled, rather than moved, through the water. We expostulated with Pedro; but it was useless; the marineros never did row while there was the least apology for a wind abroad, and the "demonio" himself couldn't make them. So Pedro lit his cigar, while the men produced a pack of cards, and commenced a game, novel enough to us, in which it was the privilege of the winner to pinch, beat, and otherwise maltreat the loser, who was obliged to submit without resistance, until the spectators pronounced "bastante," enough. One fellow, who was a

little rebellious, was incontinently thrust overboard, to the great damage of a gaudy bandana handkerchief which he wore about his head, and to the manifest delectation of the crew, who jibed him unmercifully as a "ladron," and "picaro," "a rascal" and "a loafer."

The sun went down that night directly behind the purple peak of Orosi. The body of the volcano appeared to be a nucleus, whence fan-like rays radiated up to the very zenith, while the yellow light streamed past the mountain upon the lake, in a dazzling flood, in which the islands of Solentenami and La Boqueta seemed to float as in liquid gold. As the sun sank lower, the hues of the heavens changed to crimson, bringing out the palm-trees on the islands in high relief against the sky; then to purple, and finally to the cool gray of evening, through which the stars shone down with a strange and almost unnatural lustre. The transition was rapid, for here the lingering twilight of northern latitudes is unknown. Our boatmen were not insensible to the almost unearthly beauty of the scene; and when it all was passed, they began the evening chaunt,

"Ave Maria purisima," etc.

the echoes of which were repeated from the shores, until they died away in murmurs in the distance.

The night was wonderfully still. We could distinctly hear the tinkling of guitars at the fort, at least three miles distant, interrupted by bursts of gay laughter, until a late hour. Before I slunk under the *chopa*, however, clouds began to gather in the north-east, lighted up momentarily by flashes of lightning, while fitful gusts of wind, veering in every quarter, betokened the approach of a thunder-storm. I nevertheless went to sleep while listening to the distant mutterings of thunder and the dismal howlings of the "mono colorado," or howling monkey. A little past midnight,

however, we were all roused in a summary manner by a dash of water full in our faces, followed the next instant by the lurching of the boat, which tumbled passengers, arms, books, and whatever was movable, all in a heap together. I disengaged myself in a moment, and scrambled out upon the pineta, where Pedro, clinging to the tiller, was calling frantically to the men, who in a confused, shouting mass were clustered around the swaying mast, vainly endeavoring to take in the sail. We were before the wind, which was blowing a hurricane, and going with immense velocity, the hissing waters rising under our stern, almost to the level of the pineta. Broad sheets of blinding lightning fell around us, followed by deafening peals of thunder, drowning for a moment the roar of the tempest. I had hardly time to comprehend the peril of our situation, with the sail entangled in the ropes, and swaying from side to side, when a flash of lightning revealed to me Ben's stalwart form amongst the frightened marineros. I saw his short Roman sword glance for an instant above their heads,—he had cut the ropes. The sail fell, but was at once dragged aboard, while the relieved boat scudded steadily before the storm, which soon exhausted itself, leaving us drenched and uncomfortable, tossing roughly amongst the waves. The men took to the oars without an order, and in evident relief pulled back towards the course from which we had been driven. All that night, thunderstorms, like invading columns, swept over the lake around us, but we fell in the course of none of them. They all seemed to linger against the high volcanoes on the opposite shores of the lake, as if they would level in their wrath the daring rocks which opposed their progress.

The men slept no more that night, but pulled steadily and silently at the oars. Towards morning I crept again under the *chopa*, and slumbered until roused by the bellowing of cattle, and by the sun shining brilliantly in my face. It was after nine o'clock: we had passed the islands of La Boqueta,

which lay within view, fresh and inviting, exposing under an archway of trees one or two picturesque huts, with canoes drawn up in front of them. We were within a snug little bay, in front of a broad sandy beach, on which the men were kindling fires preparatory to breakfast, while a herd of sleek-looking cattle wandered along the shore, here stooping to drink, and there engaging in mimic fights. Beneath the trees wound back a broad, well-beaten pathway, and beyond we could see the golden tops of palm-trees, the thatched roofs of houses, and hear the crowing of cocks, and the merry sound of infant voices. We were in the "Bahita de San Miguel," the little bay of San Miguel, distant about twenty miles from San Carlos, on the northern shore of the lake. The storm of the preceding night seemed almost like a dream; could it be possible that a few hours had wrought such a change? But the tattered sails, and the saturated blankets beneath the *chopa*, bore testimony to the reality of the storm. In fact, Pedro was yet full of wrath at what he called the stupidity of his men—they were "tontos" all, fools and brutes. I had been as indignant as himself, but was too glad to get out of the scrape safely, to nurse my wrath; so I poured out for Pedro a gill of brandy in his calabash, which he drank to our good health, and smacking his lips, straightway recovered his temper.

Directly, a little troop of girls, with purple skirts and white guipils, their long black hair dangling loosely to their waists, and balancing red water-jars on their heads, came laughing down the pathway for water. They appeared to be old friends of our crew, who hailed them gayly with "à Dios, mi alma!" "buena mañana, mi corazon!" adieu my soul!" "good morning, my heart!" to which they replied with "como estan, mis negritos?" "how are you, my darkeys?" and other railleries, very much, to our thinking, of the Bowery order. They passed along the shore a little distance, to a clump of bushes, and the next instant we saw them plashing

like mermaids in the water; while some of our crew, who were throwing a net "for a fry," as Pedro said, tried to frighten them by shouting "lagartos, lagartos!" "alligators, alligators!" and affecting to make great efforts to escape to the shore. But the girls were not to be "sold" so easily, and only laughed the louder, and splashed water in the faces of the jesters as they ran by. Upon discovering us, instead, as the reader might suppose, of making for the shore in confusion, they paddled boldly up to the boat, their long hair trailing like a veil on the surface of the water. They looked laughingly up in our faces for a moment, exclaiming, "California," then ducked under, and were away. It seemed to us, while they stood drying their wet locks on the beach, that no sculptor could desire fairer models for his studio; nor the painter a more effective group for "the Bath of the Naides." We were there in an auspicious period: those days of primitive simplicity are passing away, if, indeed, they are not already past.

After drying ourselves in the sun, we took our guns and went on shore. We followed the inviting path to which I have referred, for a short distance, when we reached a brisk little brook which came murmuring among the stones with a familiar New England accent, here rippling over the bright sand, and there widening into broad, transparent pools. In one of them a whole bevy of little naked children were tumbling about, who took to their heels, like young ducks, upon our approach. Here we met Ben, coming down from the rancherias with two foaming calabashes of fresh milk, one of which was drained on the spot, the other reserved for our coffee. I shot a few strange water-birds and a parrot amongst the bushes, and strayed back to the shore just in time for broiled fish, crisp and hot from the fire.

Every step into this strange country had been full of novelty; and although our interest never flagged for an instant, yet we thought San Miguelito more interesting than any place

we had encountered, and at first entertained some vague notions of stopping there for the day. But when the freshness of the morning had passed, which it did before we had finished breakfast, when the cattle had all gone off in the woods, and no more amphibious girls came down for water, we were not only ready but anxious to depart, which we did a little before noon. I shall never forget our breakfast at San Miguelito.

The day was still and sultry: Nature seemed wearied of the elemental war of the preceding night, and anxious for repose; the branches on the palm trees on the shore appeared to droop languidly; while the men, under plea of previous extra labor, paddled along at what Ben piously denominated "a poor, dying rate." The north-east trades sweep entirely across the continent in Nicaragua, and this wind, for boats bound from San Carlos to Granada, is therefore exceedingly favorable. They keep close under the northern shore, following its bendings, until they get nearly opposite Granada, and then stretch boldly across the lake. This is done because, with their imperfect sailing gear, venturing into the mid-lake would almost infallibly end in being blown over to the leeward shore, whence they could only be relieved by long and toilsome rowing against a cross sea—for on that shore the waves roll with almost the strength and majesty of those of the ocean. The later-built boats have something of a keel, and are schooner-rigged. These make the passage from the fort more directly. But our sails were, I suppose, a perpetuation of those used by the Indians before the Discovery, and quite indescribable. Pedro said they were "no good," except before the wind, and there they would make the boat fly, to use his own words, "like devil." The vision of the night recurred to me, and I yielded a full assent to the remark.

We spent nearly the whole day in vain trials to catch the ghosts of breezes, which came drowsily over the water, in our

sails. I presume they were raised a score of times during the afternoon, but they only fluttered for a moment, and then dropped around the masts. This went on until the men felt hungry, and then we put in again at "El Pedernal," the landing-place for the cattle estate of Don Frederico Derbyshire, a merchant residing in Granada, the owner of "La Granadina," and to whom we bore letters of introduction from his correspondents in the United States. The place is not inappropriately named "The Flint." It is the very reverse of San Miguel; there is no smooth sandy beach, but instead, the whole shore is piled with rugged black basaltic or trachytic rocks, blistered with heat, among which grow some stunted trees. A narrow path winds amongst the rocks to a little cove, in which our boat was run. A man was despatched to the estate, which is situated a mile or two inland, to know of the mayor-domo if any of the products of the farm were to be sent to the city. Meanwhile the men went deliberately through the usual tedious process of dinner-making, and we got over the side for a bath. Notwithstanding the rocky shore, the bottom is a soft black mud, in which we sank to the knees. This was neither expected nor pleasant, and when I discovered an alligator slowly rise to the surface not two rods distant, I clambered aboard with more expedition than grace, and gave the monster the contents of my gun, in return for the courtesy of his appearance.

It was nearly sunset, dinner had been finished, and the kettles had been towed on board again, when we heard voices, and suddenly turning round the point of rocks there came three horsemen, each carrying, in net-work sacks, four large square cheeses, of the weight of two arrobas (fifty pounds) each. The horses were ridden up to the side of the boat, and the cheeses carefully placed in the centre. This finished, a breeze having meantime sprung up, we hoisted sail, and glided away from "El Pedernal," not at all dissatisfied to

leave its rocks and alligators to their own pleasant company.

One of my companions, who had been growing silent and pale for several hours, now gave signs of an approaching crisis of some sort. Pedro pronounced him laboring under an "empacho," and recommended brandy—that was his universal specific for everything, from a sprained ankle to the toothache. But the patient protested against the medicine, as an abomination which made him only the worse to think of. I thought it a capital opportunity to bring out the medicine-chest, which had been packed with an extensive regard to all sorts of contingencies at "Rushton and Clark's," and Ben began a grand rummage for it, to the utter distraction of everything in the boat. Meantime, as became a learned practitioner, I propounded the question usually asked by anxious mammas of complaining children, "what have you eaten?" It turned out that, besides half a calabash of fresh milk, fried fish, three eggs, a slice of ham, and bread and coffee *ad libitum*, the patient had "put in" the afternoon with raw plantains, and "*dulce*"—sugar! I comprehended that "empacho" meant something like surfeit, and to disguise the dose, mixed a little tartar emetic with magnesia, which wrought a wonderful cure—much to my elevation in the eyes of the crew, who set me down at once as a great *medico*. I had immediate applications on behalf of ailing wives, scalded babies, and feverish boys, for all of which I prescribed, after deliberate consultation of the "Pocket Physician." While this was going on night fell, and I lost the sunset,—a circumstance for which, as he is thereby spared the description, the reader is no doubt properly thankful.

As the evening progressed, the breeze continued to freshen, and about midnight, Pedro, calculating that we were sufficiently to the windward, laid the course of the boat direct for Granada. I went to bed early, and owing to the disturb-

ance of the previous night, slept soundly. When I woke, we were in mid lake, and might have been in mid sea, for all the difference discoverable in the appearance of the waves and water. The wind was strong, cool, and damp, and the men had their handkerchiefs bound round their heads, and their blankets wrapped over their shoulders. My ailing companion looked sentimental, and professed not to have wholly recovered from the "empacho," but as I felt qualmish myself, I pronounced it sea-sickness, which, as every traveller knows, never entitles the sufferer to sympathy.

We were at least thirty miles from land, yet the shores appeared wonderfully distinct and near. We now, for the first time, felt the majesty of the giant volcanoes of Ometepec and Madeira, which had hitherto seemed so dim and distant. There they rose clear and bold against the sky, regular as works of art, the moving clouds casting their sides in shadow, and clasping their summits as they passed, then sweeping away to the distant islands of the great Pacific. Between us and the shore was the high, uninhabited island of Zapatero, its outline changing every moment with our position, while directly in front, distinguished by the towering edges of its vast and ragged crater, rose the extinct volcano of Momobacho, at the foot of which stands the ancient city of Granada. High above the forests of the shore, are some conical hills, of light green, bordering on yellow, which seemed to be cleared, and which puzzled us exceedingly. We became familiar with them afterwards, and I presume they are common in all volcanic regions. They are the cones of scoriæ, sand, and ashes, which are heaped up during eruptions. On these, trees rarely take root, but in their place a species of long, coarse grass weaves a net-work of verdure over their smooth sides. This grass is of a lively green during the rainy season, but becomes yellow in the dry, when the hills are burned over, after which they change to deep sable. Thus forever varying, they constitute remarkable and characteristic fea-

tures in a Nicaraguan landscape. Upon the northern shore of the lake we saw only the broken volcanic mountains of Chontales, patched with trees, here black with lava, and there red and white with scoriæ and sand. It should be observed that it is only that part of Chontales bordering the upper portion of the lake, which presents this burned and broken aspect. Elsewhere the shores are comparatively low and undulating, with extensive savannas, which furnish abundant pasturage. The whole district is well adapted for grazing purposes.

While we were occupied with the novel and beautiful scenery of the lake, our men, collected around the foot of the mast, were engaged in a low but earnest discussion, which we soon discovered related to politics, and especially to the attempted revolution of which we had heard so much. They made frequent use of the terms "Timbucos" and "Calandracas," which were about as significant to us as "Coons" and "Locofocos" probably were to strangers on our own shores, during certain presidential elections. We had abstained from asking questions about politics, not from want of interest, but from motives of policy; but took occasion to hear all that might be said upon the subject. We had thus contrived to get some imperfect notions of the partisan divisions of the country; the bases of which, though very trivial to the impartial traveller, were probably quite as important in fact as those which we had seen sustained with so much vehemence and virulence at home. It was easy to discover that our crew were unanimously "Timbucos," or of the government party, while the "Calandracas" were the disaffected portion of the people. They, however, appeared to have but a sectional importance, and were far from numerous, except in the southern departments of the Republic. The robber-chief, Somoza, had turned this partisan feeling to some account by professing to be its champion, and having collected a few hundred reckless and ignorant men around him, made a sud-

den and successful attack on Rivas, or Nicaragua, which was defended by a small garrison of only forty soldiers. In the attack he burned a number of houses, and committed some cruel murders, besides pillaging and robbing on every hand. According to the accounts which had reached us, however, the entire city had been burned, and the inhabitants slaughtered indiscriminately and without mercy. These stories, as well as those relating to the number of his forces, proved, in the end, to be gross exaggerations,—as the reader will discover in due course.

It appeared, from what was said, that there had been a vague rumor at San Carlos, to the effect that Somoza, at the head of three thousand men, had set out some days previously for an attack on the city of Granada; and the probabilities of its truth, and the course to be pursued in the event he should have reached there, were now, as we approached the city, subjects of increasing interest with our men. The circumstance that we had, on the day preceding, seen a number of boats, making what appeared to be a forced trip in the direction of San Carlos, but too far distant to be hailed, was dwelt upon as exceedingly significant. In short, it was evident enough that the feeling of excited suspense amongst the men was every moment increasing. Pedro was silent, and answered our questions evasively, but listened earnestly to all that was said. He seemed to be oppressed by a sense of responsibility of some kind; but whether on account of himself, his boat, or his distinguished passengers, we could not make out.

By the veering of the wind, or the "falling off" of our keel-less boat, instead of making the northern islands of the group called the "Corales," rising, hundreds in number, at the foot of the volcano of Momobacho, we found ourselves, at about two o'clock in the afternoon, at the almost extreme southern part of the archipelago. The approach to these islands was exceedingly beautiful; but when we were

amongst them, out of the rough waves into the smooth water, they were really enchanting. They are of volcanic origin, elevated in the form of cones, to the height of from twenty to one hundred feet. The sides are steep, and composed of immense volcanic rocks, black and blistered by fire; but their summits are covered with verdure, and long vines hang trailing over the stones, blushing with strange flowers, almost to the edge of the water. Some of them, upon which there is a sufficient accumulation of soil, are inhabited by Indians; and their thatched huts, shaded by tall palms, with a dense background of plantains, are the most picturesque objects that can be imagined.

Within these islands the sail was dropped, and the oars resumed. Everybody was now anxious to hear the news, but the huts on the islands seemed to be deserted; at least no one appeared, although the men shouted to the inmates at top of their voices. Very soon a canoe, containing a boy and a woman, shot across our course, from between two little islands, just in advance. For a moment they showed evidences of alarm, and a disposition to retreat; but recognising Pedro, they came alongside, under a shower of confused and eager questions, which completely confounded us, and prevented anything like an understanding of what was said. We conjectured that the news was of an exciting kind, from the earnest faces and violent gestures of the crew. By-and-by the canoe pushed off, but it was full a quarter of an hour before the men took up the oars, during which time there was a warm discussion as to whether the boat should proceed at once to Granada, or remain concealed amongst the islands until the issue of affairs at the city could be ascertained. The opinion, however, seemed to be pretty decided, that we should go ahead, at whatever hazard. This decision was based, as we afterwards discovered, on the faith reposed in "la bandera del Norte America," the flag of the United States; which they all believed neither man nor devil dared disre-

gard. It appeared that the woman and boy of the canoe had told an alarming story of the approach of Somoza, the flight of the inhabitants, and the probable capture of the city. But Pedro, more cautious than the rest, was of the opinion that their tale had but little better foundation than their fears; and expressed great faith in the ability of the little garrison of "veteranos," stationed in the city, to prevent its being carried by Somoza. His faith was somewhat shaken, however, on learning, a few minutes thereafter, from an Indian, lurking on one of the islands, that there had been a great firing in the city the previous night and this morning; and that all the boats had left the landing and made for the opposite shore of the lake.

There is pleasure in all kinds of excitement, which is rather enhanced than diminished by the presence of danger. And so far from being alarmed by these accounts, I was only the more anxious to get to Granada. I had been told that Somoza, notwithstanding his crimes, cruelty, and contempt for the laws, had much of the cavalier in his composition; gay, gallant, generous, and withal the finest looking and most dashing fellow in all Nicaragua. No man rode such fine horses, or could rival him in wielding the lance. Indeed, the commandante at San Carlos had intimated that he owed it to the place which he held in the good graces of the señoritas of the country, that he had so long baffled justice and defied pursuit. Altogether I had pictured him something like the gentlemanly cut-throat of the Apennines and Sierra Morina, or the amiable bandits of the Peninsula, and almost considered myself fortunate in the prospect of an adventure, at my very first step in the country.

Two hours of steady rowing amongst the fairy "Corales" brought us to the little island of Cubi, when a broad bay, with a white beach, and an old castle on the shore, opened before us; while beyond a belt of woods, on higher ground, rose the towers of Granada. We could distinguish little of

the town except the red, tiled roofs of the houses; and though from this distance it was far from imposing, yet we had so long looked forward to our arrival here, that had dome been piled on dome, and palace risen above palace, in long perspective, we could not have experienced greater satisfaction than we now did in gazing, for the first time, upon this ancient city. At the island, we found several huts, and a number of boats drawn into little nooks between the rocks, while beneath the trees were clusters of women and children, and here and there groups of men, absorbed in playing some noisy game of cards. With a vivid recollection of the indifferent figure we had cut at the fort, we had arranged with Pedro to stop here, in order to replace our stained and tattered garments; an operation which we soon discovered must be performed in face of the assembled population of Cubi, unless we preferred to encounter the fleas which we fancied must infest the dirty, dog-stocked huts on the shore. We chose the former alternative; but had hardly commenced the disruption of trunks and boxes, and the overhauling of carpet bags, before we heard a cannon in the direction of the city, followed very soon by what appeared to be a rolling discharge of musketry; and looking in that direction, we could see a volume of smoke rising from the centre of the town. Our invalid had a violent recurrence of his "empacho," refused tartar emetic, anticipated a fever, and was altogether too ill to leave the island. So he was led up to one of the huts, and deposited in a hammock. Meantime the fusilade ended with one or two more discharges of cannon, while a white cloud rose slowly over the city. Our first impression was that Somoza had arrived, and that a fight was already in progress. The people of the island were also somewhat startled, and for a time watched the town with evident anxiety; but in the end quietly resumed their amusements. Pedro also seemed to be relieved; and after listening for a while, finally exclaimed that all was right:

the day, he said, was a *fiesta*, and what we had supposed a discharge of firearms, was only the explosion of "*bombas*" or rockets,—"in point of fact," fireworks. I cannot say that I was particularly gratified with the information, after having prepared myself for a siege at least, if not an assault.

Myriads of bees, attracted by the sweets in the boat, swarmed around us while making our toilet. Their first onset fairly drove us out on the rocks, but Pedro quieted us with the assurance that they were stingless, when we returned and completed our arrangements. It was late in the afternoon, the wind blowing fair, when we again put up sail, and steered for the landing of Granada. As we approached, we discovered hundreds of people on the shore and in the water, some in groups, and others in gay trappings dashing about on horseback,—a picture of activity and life. On the gray walls of the old castle we also discerned soldiers, their muskets glancing in the sun; and, anchored a little distance from the shore, was an odd-looking craft, in two pieces, resembling some awkward canal-boat, which we afterwards discovered had been built to receive the engine and boiler which we had seen in San Juan. In this rude, unwieldy affair, with infinite trouble, and after three weeks of toil, a party of some seventy-five outward-bound Californians had ascended the river and passed the lake to this place,—the pioneers on this line of transit.

In an hour after leaving Cubi, we cast anchor under the walls of the old castle. Our flag attracted immediate attention, and the people crowded upon the walls of the fort to look at us. Some called to Pedro, with a multitude of gesticulations; but the noise of the surf was so great that we could not make out what was said. The question which presented itself most strongly to us was, how are we going to land? for a surf like that of the ocean broke on the shore. We had a practical answer, however, very shortly. The cable was let out, so as to bring us as far in shore as was

ANCIENT CASTLE, GRANADA.

safe, and then three or four sailors leaped overboard, their heads and shoulders just appearing above the water, and invited us to get on! Get on what—where—how? Pedro explained that we were to put our feet on the shoulders, and seat ourselves on the head of one, and hold on with our hands to the hair of another just in advance. After a number of awkward attempts, which excited great merriment, and at the expense of wetted feet, we finally got into position, and were duly deposited on shore, amidst a swarm of boys and women. Some of the former pressed forward, exclaiming "California," or "goode by," and then disappeared laughing amongst their companions. It was very evident that our countrymen had created a great sensation in their progress. Probably no equal number of strangers had passed through the country for a century.

Pedro slipped off his clothes, and holding them above his head, also came on shore, in ecstatic spirits to find the town standing and all safe. He dressed with great expedition, and with much dignity put himself in advance, to escort us to the town. Not at all sorry to get out of the crowd of gazers, we followed along a broad, well-beaten road, with elevated foot-paths on each side, in the direction of the city. The ascent seemed to be by terraces; the faces of which were paved with stone, and guarded by masonry, to protect them from the wasting action of the rains. Palms, plantains, orange and other tropical trees lined the road on either hand, shut in by a hedge composed of a species of cactus, bearing brilliant red flowers. We met troops of laughing girls, of every shade of complexion, from pure white to ebon black, fancifully attired, with water-jars on their heads, on their way to the lake. They were as straight as arrows, and seemed to have an infinite fund of animal spirits. Most of them passed us with a side glance, half of curiosity and half of mischief, while others more bold, turning full round, ex-

claimed gayly, "Adios, caballeros!" to which we responded, "Adios, mi alma!" much to their apparent entertainment.

It was full a third of a mile to a steep terrace, ascending which we found ourselves amongst the neat cane huts composing the suburbs of the city, and in which reside the poorer portion of the population. Most of these, like those at San Carlos and San Juan, were built of canes and thatched with palm leaves or grass, while others were plastered with mud, and whitewashed. A clump of fruit-trees overshadowed each, and within the doors we could discover women spinning cotton with a little foot-wheel, or engaged in grinding corn for tortillas. On almost every house were one or two parrots screaming at each other, or at some awkward looking macaw, which waddled clumsily along the crown of the roof. Around all, dogs, chickens, and children mingled in perfect equality.

Beyond these huts commenced the city proper. The buildings were of adobes, on cut stone foundations, and roofed with tiles. The windows were all balconied, and protected on the outside by ornamental iron gratings, and within by painted shutters. They were, with scarcely an exception, of one high story. The principal entrances were by arched and often elaborately ornamented gateways, within which swung massive doors, themselves containing smaller ones, all opening into the courtyards. Besides these, there were, in some instances, other entrances, opening directly into the grand sala of the house. The eaves of all the houses project several feet beyond the walls, serving the double purpose of protecting the latter from the rains, and sheltering the foot-passenger from the sun and the elements. The side or foot-walks were all raised one or two feet above the street, and flagged, but barely wide enough to admit persons meeting each other to pass. Towards the centre of the town some of the streets are paved, like those of our own cities, with this

difference, that instead of a convex, they present a concave surface, so that the gutter is in the centre of the street.

As we progressed, we met a number of well-dressed people, of both sexes, who, seeing that we were strangers, bowed respectfully to us as we passed. Evidences of comfort, not to say elegance, now began to appear, and through an occasional open door we caught glimpses of sofas and easy chairs, and beds which a Sybarite might envy. Occasionally there were niches in the walls of the houses, in which were placed crosses, covered with faded flowers; in some instances the crosses were simply fastened to the walls, or planted at the corners of the streets. Advancing further, we found ourselves in the shadow of a large and massive stone building, with terraces, domes, and towers, half Moresque, and altogether an architectural incongruity. It appeared to be very ancient, and I stopped Pedro, who strode ahead with the gait of a conquering hero, to inquire what building it might be. He said it was the ancient and now abandoned convent of San Francisco, and showed us the gratings through which its former inmates had intercourse with the world, and pointed out the wooden cross in front, made of cedar from Lebanon. I do not know how long Pedro would have run on, had I not cut his story short, by saying I would hear the rest to-morrow. Just then a party of soldiers defiled across the street in front of us. They were bare-footed, and wore white pantaloons and jackets, with funny little, black caps, banded with metal, and having little, round, red cockades stuck saucily in front. A dashing young officer rode at their head, who lifted his hat gracefully to us. It was a scouting party just coming in. We followed them with our eyes down the street, and saw that sentinels were stationed at the corners, but two squares distant, and that the streets near the plaza were barricaded with adobes and timbers, with a single embrasure in the centre, through which a cannon looked grimly towards us. We now observed that soldiers

were stationed on the walls of the convent, and in the towers of the parochial church, which had just come in view. It was evident that the government and military were on the alert, and prepared for any emergency. We found the streets more animated, and the houses better built, as we approached the centre of the town; women were moving hither and thither with trays, vegetables, bottles, and a hundred other commodities on their heads, and babies on their hips, and men with slouched hats, and breeches turned up to their knees, bare-footed, or wearing sandals, and carrying a large machete in their hands, were driving meek-looking horses, bearing loads, through the streets before them, or else with a long, iron-pointed pole, pricking on little compact oxen, fastened by the horns to long, heavy, awkward carts, with solid wheels cut from the mahogany tree. Amongst these flitted now and then a priest, with his black robe, preposterous bell-crowned, fur hat, and gaudy umbrella. There were quiet señoritas, also, moving slowly along, with a grace and dignity of motion seldom or never seen in our cities; and gay fellows on fiery little horses, who dashed at a break-neck pace through the streets. It was a novel scene, and we had hardly taken in its more striking features, when Pedro stopped before a large arched gateway, or *portada*, as it is called here, and told us this was the "Casa del Señor Don Frederico." He unlatched the small door within the larger, and entering, we found ourselves in a broad corridor, completely surrounding a court, in which were growing a number of orange, marañon, and other fruit trees, fragrant bushes, and clumps of flowers. On one side was the store, filled with bales and boxes, and in front of it were huge scales for weighing commodities; while the sala, dining, and private rooms occupied the remaining two sides of the court. In one corner of the corridor were two or three movable desks, where Don Frederico's children were engaged in their afternoon lessons with their tutor, a pale, intellectual look-

ing young man; and just beyond, reclining in a hammock, was the portly form of Don Frederico himself. Pedro approached him, hat in hand, and with profound reverence, announced us. Our host immediately rose, and in due course I delivered my letters, which were honored in a spirit of the most enlarged and liberal hospitality. A part of a spacious and commodious house immediately opposite, which was occupied by the children of Don Frederico and their governess, was at once ordered to be prepared for our accommodation, while a couple of carts were despatched to the shore for our luggage. Our reception was so warm and cordial, that I felt at once perfectly at home, and was delighted with the neatness and comfort of everything around us. Don Frederico was born in Jamaica, but had resided for thirty years in the country, where he had married, become a citizen, and accumulated a large fortune. Entertaining the respect and confidence of all parties, he had passed safely through all the troubles to which the country had been subjected. He seemed very little alarmed at the threatened attack on the city, and felt confident that the insurgents would ultimately be put down. Still, unless reinforcements speedily arrived from the government, he anticipated that trouble might ensue, and perhaps an assault be attempted, because Somoza was as daring as he was unscrupulous. But even then it was only necessary to barricade the doors, and every house became a fortress. He had gone through several revolutions, securely locked in, eating and sleeping as usual. When the affair was over, he opened the portada again, and things went on as before.

As we had eaten scarcely anything during the day, our host gave us a cup of chocolate, pending the preparation of dinner. While thus engaged, we were surprised by the appearance of an officer bearing a note from the commandante of the Plaza, congratulating us upon our safe arrival, and very considerately proposing that some time should be named,

when we were recovered from our fatigues, to enable him to pay his respects in person. He also placed a guard at our disposition, which I of course declined. Hardly had this messenger been despatched, before another, from the Prefect of the Department, made his appearance. The next day at noon was named for receptions, and meantime we instructed the *portero* or gatekeeper to report us to all visitors as engaged.

The evening passed delightfully with our host. It was a great relief to stretch one's legs once more beneath a table spread like our own at home; a pleasure not slightly enhanced by the presence of entirely new and curious dishes, upon the merits of which we successively passed summary, and generally favorable, judgments. A gentle shower meanwhile pattered upon the tiled roofs, cooling and purifying the air; and we experienced, for the first time, the pleasures attending life in a well-appointed residence beneath the tropics. After the bell struck eight, we heard every five minutes the word "*Alerte!*" caught up in succession by the guards, in evidence that they were all awake, and keeping a bright lookout. Occasionally the "*Quien vive?*" or challenge of the sentinel stationed at the corner of the street below us, was given with an emphasis which fell startlingly upon our unaccustomed ears. Our host was used to it. We were really in the midst of war and "its alarums," and felt all the better for it. We retired early to our new quarters, which consisted of a large sala, in which were a piano, mahogany tables and chairs, with sleeping apartments attached. Here we found that Ben, with an eye to all our wants, had arranged everything necessary to our comfort. Forty nights in close, narrow berths, in hammocks, and on the tops of boxes and trunks, had qualified us to enjoy the delightfully cool and scrupulously neat *camas* which that evening invited us to slumber. I bestowed myself in one without ceremony, and in less time than I am writing it, went to sleep, to dream of Somoza, storms on the lake, and a thousand incongruous

matters. Nor did I wake until Ben, utterly renovated, and looking wonderfully genteel, came to announce that breakfast was ready. It was some seconds before I could comprehend clearly where I was; but once awake, I found myself thoroughly refreshed, and ready for any turn of events,—breakfast or revolutions.

THE PLANTAIN TREE.

CHAPTER V.

RECEPTION-DAY—GENERAL RESPECT AND ADMIRATION FOR THE UNITED STATES—AN EVENING RIDE—THE PLAZA—CHURCHES—HOSPITAL—THE "JALTEVA"—DESERTED MUNICIPALITY—MELANCHOLY RESULTS OF FACTION—THE ARSENAL—NATURAL DEFENCES OF THE CITY—"CAMPO SANTO"—AN EX-DIRECTOR AND HIS "HACIENDA"—SHORE OF THE LAKE IN THE EVENING—OLD CASTLE—THE "ORACION"—AN EVENING VISIT TO THE SENORITAS—OPERA AMIDST ORANGE GROVES—"ALERTAS" AND "QUIEN VIVAS?"—THE GRANADINAS AT HOME—AN EPISODE ON WOMEN AND DRESS—MR. ESTEVENS—"LOS MALDITOS INGLESES"—A FEMALE ANTIQUARIAN COADJUTOR—"CIGARITAS"—INDIAN GIRLS—COUNTRYMEN—AN AMERICAN "MEDICO"—NATIVE HOSPITALITY TO STRANGERS—THE WAYS INFESTED BY "FACCIOSOS"—AN AMERICAN TURNED BACK—EXPECTED ASSAULT ON THE CITY, AND PATRIOTIC RESOLVES "TO DIE UNDER THE AMERICAN FLAG"—A NOTE ON HORSES AND SADDLES—VISIT TO THE CACAO ESTATES OF THE MALACCAS—THE CACAO TREE—DAY-DREAMS—AN ADVENTURE ALMOST—GRIEVOUS DISAPPOINTMENT—SOMOZA, THE ROBBER CHIEF—OUR ARMORY—FEVERISHNESS OF THE PUBLIC MIND—LIFE UNDER THE TROPICS—A FRIGHTENED AMERICAN, WHO HAD "SEEN SOMOZA," AND HIS ACCOUNT OF THE INTERVIEW—SOMOZA'S LOVE FOR THE AMERICANS—GOOD NEWS FROM LEON—APPROACH OF THE GENERAL IN CHIEF, AND AN ARMED AMERICAN ESCORT—CONDITION OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS—PROCLAMATION OF THE SUPREME DIRECTOR—DECREES OF THE GOVERNMENT—OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND PUBLIC ADDRESSES—HOW THEY EXHIBITED THE POPULAR FEELING—NICARAGUAN RHETORIC—DECISIVE MEASURES TO PUT DOWN THE INSURGENTS—GENERAL CALL TO ARMS—MARTIAL LAW—PUBLICATION OF A "BANDA"—GREAT PREPARATIONS TO RECEIVE THE GENERAL IN CHIEF AND HIS "VETERANOS"—NO FURTHER FEAR OF THE "FACCIOSOS"—A BREAK-NECK RIDE TO THE "LAGUNA DE SALINAS"—A VOLCANIC LAKE—DESCENT TO THE WATER—HOW CAME ALLIGATORS THERE?—NATIVE "AGUARDIENTE" "NOT BAD TO TAKE"—RETURN TO THE CITY—A RELIGIOUS PROCESSION—THE HOST—INCREASING TOLERANCE OF THE PEOPLE—PREPARATIONS FOR "LA MANANA."

At noon, agreeably to appointment, we were waited upon by the dignitaries of the city, and the commander of the gar-

rison, together with a large number of the leading inhabitants. They all exhibited the same cordiality with the ruder portion of the population, and a degree of refinement and courtesy which would have done credit to more pretending capitals. We were a little startled by the somewhat exaggerated tone of compliment, both in respect to ourselves and our country, which ran through their conversation, and which seems characteristic of the Spanish people wherever found, in the Old World or the New. All concurred in representing the present unsettled state of public affairs as in a great measure due to foreign intervention and intrigue; and referred to the seizure of San Juan, and the English encroachments on their territories, in a tone of indignation and reproach, commensurate with the indignity and outrage to which they had been subjected. They seemed to entertain the highest hopes from the opening of more intimate relations with the United States; but, unacquainted with the nature, constitutional powers, and the policy of our government, these hopes were, as a matter of course, somewhat vague; yet it was not unnatural that, distracted within, and subjected to unscrupulous aggression from without, the United States should be looked to as a conciliator of intestine factions, as a friend, and a protector. I was deeply impressed with the feeling which they manifested, and was convinced that if once treated with consideration, and taught to respect themselves as a nation, there was no reason why the States of the Isthmus should not take a respectable rank amongst the republics of the continent. The interview was highly interesting, and gave me more elevated views of the temper of the people of the country than I had gathered from what had been published concerning them; an impression which a further and more intimate acquaintance only tended to confirm.

Towards evening, in company with Col. Trinidad Salazar, the commandant of the Plaza, we took a ride through the

city and its environs. We found that with the exception of the Church of La Mercedes, and the Convent of San Francisco, already mentioned, there were few buildings at all remarkable or imposing. The Parochial Church, on the plaza, is very ancient, and distinguished as containing the bones of several of the first bishops of Nicaragua, which was established as a diocess as early as 1532. The interior was far from imposing. It had some paintings, too ancient to be distinguished, with some indifferent prints of saints, and scenes in the life of Christ and the apostles. Upon one side of the plaza is the façade of the unfinished church of San Juan de Dios, which was designed to be the most beautiful in the city, but for some reason was never finished. The façade is very elaborate, and profusely loaded with ornament. It has been standing in its present condition for more than a hundred years. A hospital has been erected in the area it was intended to occupy, which is supported by a small market tax and voluntary contributions. Buildings of one or two stories, with spacious corridors in front, extend round two sides of the square, in which are some of the principal retail "*tiendas*" of the city. The wares of the shopkeepers were as conspicuously displayed as in some of the minor streets at home; while in front were the market-women, with fruits, cacao, maize, and all the various edibles of the season. These were generally placed in baskets, or spread on a white sheet on the ground, in a style probably very little different from that practised by the aborigines at the time of the Conquest. All the streets leading from the plaza were barricaded, and we found advance posts of troops in every part of the city.

From the grand plaza we rode through the narrow streets, between long rows of substantial houses, in the direction of the municipality of Jalteva.[1] Dashing up a broad causeway,

[1] This municipality is mostly made up of Indians. The present name, "*Jalteva*," is probably a corruption of the Indian "*Salteba*," the name

with heavy flanking walls, surmounted by urns, we came at once into the second grand plaza. Here we found the buildings more scattered, and of a poorer character; huts of canes alternating with adobe houses and open lots of ground. The plaza was deserted, and as we rode along we observed that the whole quarter seemed depopulated. We found, upon inquiry, that this municipality was the stronghold of the "Calandracas," and hereditarily jealous of the city proper. This hostility led to the collision of which we had heard, in which the disaffected party had suffered a defeat; whereupon, either from fear, or with a design of organizing for sharper work, they had chiefly fled "*al monte*," to the fields. Those who remained, with scarcely an exception, had moved, for greater security, within the city. The silence and desolation which reigned in this deserted quarter was a mournful commentary on partisan feuds. A few dogs and unclaimed cattle wandered despondingly amongst the houses, as if in search of their masters; but beyond these there were no signs of life.

Passing the Jalteva, we came into the broad open road leading to Leon, and soon reached a square compact building, which was the arsenal. It was surrounded by a high wall, and at the corners were erected towers, looped for musketry, each containing a guard of soldiers. A cannon looked morosely through the open gateway, around which was a company of lancers, just returned from some expedition. Their lances, to each of which was hung a little red streamer, flashed in the sun as they fell into line on the approach of the commandante; while the guards, on the tap of the drum, leaped to their feet, and presented arms. Just beyond the arsenal is what the commandante called the natural defence of the city. It is a deep, narrow ravine,

of the aboriginal town which occupied the site of Granada before that city was built.

with absolutely precipitous walls, worn by the rains through the volcanic or calcareous breccia upon which the city is built. It extends on three sides of the town, and can be passed only in one or two places, where lateral inclined planes have been artificially cut from the top to the bottom on one side, and from the bottom to the top on the other. It is a feature of some importance in calculating the means of defending the city, and probably had something to do in determining its site.

From the arsenal we turned off to the left, following a broad, well-beaten path, which wound beneath a complete archway of trees, vines, and flowers, in the direction of the "*Campo Santo*," or burial place of the city. This is an area of several acres of ground in extent, surrounded by a high wall of adobes, neatly whitewashed, and entered beneath a lofty gateway, surmounted by a cross, and bearing a Latin inscription, which I have forgotten. There was little to see; and, as the gates were shut, we could not enter; so, turning in the direction of the lake, we galloped to the hacienda of Don Jose Leon Sandoval, passing on the way, in a picturesque glen, shadowed over with trees, the "corral" or cattle yard of the estate. A brisk ride through the bushes brought us to the house, built upon a high terrace, overlooking the lake and city, and embowered in palm, marañon, orange, and jocote trees. The proprietor was out somewhere on the estate, and we started to find him, which we soon succeeded in doing. He was mounted on a splendid mule, and just returning from inspecting the day's work of the "*mozos*," or what in New England would be called "hired help." Don Jose proved to be a plainly dressed, substantial person, bearing a close likeness to General Taylor. Upon my mentioning the fact, he bowed low, in acknowledgment, and said that he knew the General was a farmer-soldier and a citizen-President; and he only hoped that the resemblance might extend from person, which was of little, to character, which was of

greater, consequence. Don Jose had once been Director of the State, but had resigned the office, preferring, he said, to be a good farmer rather than a poor director. We followed him over various parts of the estate to his indigo vats and drying houses, and to his plantain and cacao walks and cornfields, all of which we found to be in capital order, and bearing the evidences of intelligence, enterprise, industry, and care.

After a pleasant interview of half an hour, we bade Don Jose "*buena tarde*," and descended to the shores of the lake, just as the sun was setting, throwing the whole beach in the shade, while the fairy "Corales" were swimming in the evening light. The shore was ten-fold more animated than when we landed the previous day; men on horseback, women on foot, sailors, fishermen, idlers, children, and a swarm of water-carriers, mingling together, gave life to the scene; while boats and graceful canoes, drawn up on the beach, bongos rocking at their anchors outside, the grim old fort frowning above, and the green border of trees, with bars of sunlight streaming between them, all contributed to heighten and give effect to the picture. We rode up the glacis of the old castle, through its broken archway, into its elevated area, and looked out beyond the broad and beautiful lake, upon the distant shores of Chontales, with its earthquake-riven hills, and ragged, volcanic craters. Their rough features were brought out sharply and distinctly in the slanting light which gilded the northern slope of the gigantic volcano of Momobacho, while its eastern declivity slept in purple shadow. We were absorbed in contemplating one by one these varied beauties, when the bells of the city struck the hour of the "oracion." In an instant every voice was hushed, the horseman reined in his steed, the ropes dropped from the hands of the sailor, the sentinel on the fort stopped short in his round, even the water-jars were left half-filled, while every hat was removed, and every lip

moved in prayer. The very waves seemed to break more gently on the shore, in harmony with the vibrations of the distant bells; while the subdued hum of reverential voices filled the pauses between. There was something almost magical in this sudden hush of the multitude, and its apparently entire absorption in devotion, which could not fail deeply to impress the stranger witnessing it for the first time.

No sooner, however, had the bells ceased to toll, and struck up the concluding joyful chime, than the crowd on the shore resumed its life and gayety, while we put spurs to our horses, and dashed through their midst, on our return to the city. The commandante and his companions would only leave me at my door, where we were saluted by our host with "Saved your distance, gentlemen; dinner is ready!"

An evening visit to the Señorita Teresa finished our first entire day in Granada. This young lady had been educated in the United States, spoke English very well, and was withal a proficient in music,—accomplishments which we never before learned to estimate at their true value. It was worth something to hear well executed passages from familiar operas, amidst tangible and not painted orange trees and palms, and in an atmosphere really loaded with tropical perfumes, instead of the odors of oil-pots and gas-lights. Eight o'clock was the signal for general withdrawal from the streets, for then commenced the rigors of the military police, and the city became at once still and quiet. The occasional barking of a dog, the tinkling of a distant guitar, the soughing of the evening wind amongst the trees of the court-yard, the measured tread and graduated "alertas!" of the sentinels, were the only interruptions to the almost sepulchral silence. While returning to our quarters, we were startled by the "Quien vive?" of the sentinel, uttered in a tone absolutely ferocious, and as these fellows rarely parleyed long, we answered with all expedition, "La Patria," which was followed on the instant by "Que gente?" "Americanos del

Norte." This was enough; these, we found, were magic words, which opened every heart and every door in all Nicaragua. They never failed us. We felt proud to know that no such charm attached to "Ingleses," "Alemanes," or "Franceses."

The day following, in accordance with the "costumbres del pais," the customs of the country, we returned the visits of the preceding day, and began to see more of the domestic and social life of the citizens of Granada. We found the residences all comfortable, and many elegant, governed by mistresses simple, but graceful and confiding in their manners. They were frank in their conversation, and inquired with the utmost *naïveté* whether I was married or intended to be, and if the ladies of El Norte would probably visit Granada, when the "Vapores grandes," the great steamers, came to run to San Juan, and the "Vaporcitas," steameretts, to ply on the lake and river. They had heard of a Mr. Estevens, (their nearest approach to Stephens,) who had written a book about their "pobre pais," their poor country, and were anxious to know what he had said of them, and whether our people really regarded them as "esclavos y brutos sin verguenza," slaves and brutes without shame, as the abominable English (los malditos Ingleses) had represented them. They were also very anxious to know whether the party of Californians which had passed through were "gente comun," common people, or "caballeros," gentlemen; upon which point, however, we were diplomatically evasive, for there was more in the inquiry than we chose to notice. One lady had heard that I was a great antiquarian, and anticipatory to my visit, had got together a most incongruous collection of curiosities, from "vasos antiguos," fragments of pottery, and stone hatchets, down to an extraordinary pair of horn spectacles, and a preposterously distorted hog's hoof,—all of which she insisted on sending to my quarters, which she did, with some rare birds, and a plate of *dulces!* At every house

we found a table spread with wines and sweetmeats, and bearing a little silver brazier filled with burning coals, for the greater convenience of lighting cigars. I excited much surprise by declining to smoke, on the ground that I had never done so; but the ladies insisted on my taking a "cigarito," which they said wouldn't injure a new-born babe, and paid me the compliment of lighting it with their own fair lips, after which it would have been rank treason to etiquette, and would have ruined my reputation for gallantry, had I refused. I at first endeavored to shirk the responsibility of smoking by thrusting it into my pocket, but found that as soon as one disappeared another was presented, so I was obliged "to face the music" in the end. In every sala we found a large hammock suspended from the walls, which was invariably tendered to the visitor, even when there were easy chairs and sofas in the room. This is the seat of honor.

The women of pure Spanish stock are very fair, and have the *embonpoint* which characterizes the sex under the tropics. Their dress, except in a few instances where the stiff costume of our own country had been adopted, was exceedingly loose and flowing, leaving the neck and arms exposed. The entire dress was often pure white, but generally the skirt, or *nagua*, was of some flowered stuff, in which case the *guipil* (*anglice*, vandyke) was white, heavily trimmed with lace. Satin slippers, a red or purple sash wound loosely round the waist, and a rosary sustaining a little golden cross, with a narrow golden band or a string of pearls extending around the forehead and binding the hair, which often fell in luxuriant waves upon their shoulders, completed a costume as novel as it was graceful and picturesque. To all this, add the superior attractions of an oval face, regular features, large and lustrous black eyes, small mouth, pearly white teeth, and tiny hands and feet, and withal a low but clear voice, and the reader has a picture of a Central American lady of

pure stock. Very many of the women have, however, an infusion of other families and races, from the Saracen to the Indian and the Negro, in every degree of intermixture. And as tastes differ, so may opinions as to whether the tinge of brown, through which the blood glows with a peach-like bloom, in the complexion of the girl who may trace her lineage to the caziques upon one side, and the haughty grandees of Andalusia and Seville on the other, superadded, as it usually is, to a greater lightness of figure and animation of face,—whether this is not a more real beauty than that of the fair and more languid señora, whose white and almost transparent skin bespeaks a purer ancestry. Nor is the Indian girl, with her full, lithe figure, long, glossy hair, quick and mischievous eyes, who walks erect as a grenadier beneath her heavy water-jar, and salutes you in a musical, impudent voice as you pass—nor is the Indian girl to be overlooked in the novel contrasts which the "bello sexo" affords in this glorious land of the sun.

We called upon several French and Italian families resident in Granada, but found that a long period of naturalization had completely assimilated them to the natives of the country, with whom they had largely intermarried. But what surprised us most was, that in the best houses it was no uncommon thing to find a shop occupying the "esquina," or corner, or a room on one side of the court, in which few of the ladies thought it derogatory to their dignity or a violation of propriety, to preside on any necessary occasion. In fact, these shops were generally superintended by the wife of the proprietor, seated with her sewing in her lap, in an easy chair, behind the low counter. And even in entertaining her visitors in the grand sala, it was common for the lady to keep an eye to what was passing in the "tienda," through a convenient, open door. In the larger establishments, however, there exists all the paraphernalia of clerks and attendants which we find at home.

When we returned from our visits, we found a party of three Americans waiting for us. One was Dr. S., who had resided for many years in the country, where he held the first place as a "medico," and was a universal favorite amongst all classes of the people. By him we were introduced to the others, both of whom had come out with the company of Californians to which I have alluded. Mr. P., who was to have acted as engineer of the preposterous craft which was anchored off the Castillo, was reduced by illness, and being unable to accompany the party, had abandoned it, and was thus far on his return to the United States; but sick and destitute, was now anxiously awaiting my arrival, to procure the means of reaching home. He, however, was comfortably situated, having been generously and hospitably received by Señor Lacayo, a prominent native merchant, who had, in the current phrase of the country, placed "his house at the disposition" of the stranger. The third person was a young physician from New Haven, from whom we learned that the Californians were still detained at Leon and Chinandega, waiting for a vessel to take them off, in great impatience and discontent. Wearied of the delays, this gentleman had returned on a flying visit to Granada, where he had been staying for a fortnight. Meantime, the disturbances in the country had come to a crisis, and the day of our arrival he had attempted to return to Leon, but was turned back by armed parties on the road, who gave him the unsolicited pleasure of looking down their presented musket-barrels, by way of enforcing their wishes. The doctor, who had met Somoza in times past, and entertained a good deal of faith in his personal influence and prowess, informed us that the rebel chief had once been imprisoned in Granada, and owed it a special spite. He had sworn to burn the city, and the doctor was of opinion that he would keep his word. He thought we might, any night, have an attack; but felt confident that foreigners, keeping out of the

way, would sustain no injury. At any rate, if the worst came to the worst, we could all collect together, under the American flag, and between revolvers, rifles, and what not new invention, make a respectable fight against the poorly armed assailants. And by way of encouragement, the doctor gave us an animated account of a party of foreigners, but five or six in number, who some years before had sustained a siege of three days, in this very city, and kept their assailants at bay, until they were dispersed by the troops of the government.

I had arranged that afternoon to ride to the cacao estates called the "Malaccas," distant about five miles from Granada; and although the city was full of stories about the "facciosos" who infested the country, I persisted in my determination to go. My companions thought they could entertain themselves very well in the city; so I armed Ben, and with an English creole merchant resident here, who kindly furnished horses, started for the Malaccas. We had already discovered that the horses of Nicaragua were of the Arabian stock; and although like the Arab horses small, they were compact, fleet, good tempered, spirited, and of excellent bottom. As all travelling here is performed on horseback or on mules, great care is used in breaking and training saddle beasts, while their price depends less upon their beauty than upon their training. They are all taught a rapid but exceedingly easy gait, between trotting and pacing, called the *paso-trote*. A well-trained horse strikes at once into this gait, and keeps it steadily from morning to night. I have ridden them from twenty to forty miles at a heat, without once breaking the pace, and with less fatigue than would be occasioned in riding the best saddle-horses in the United States for a distance of five miles. At this gait the horse gets over the level roads of Nicaragua, at from six to eight miles the hour. The same animal is frequently taught several gaits, and may be forced into one

or the other by a peculiar pressure on the bit, which is very different from those used in the United States, and gives the most perfect control of the animal to the rider. Besides the *paso-trote*, which may be called the ordinary gait, the horses are taught an easy amble, the *paso-llano*, which is very rapid, and yet so gentle that, as observed by a recent Peruvian traveller, the rider may carry a cup of water in his hand without spilling a drop, while going at the rate of six miles an hour. There are also other gaits taught to different horses, which have each their advocates; among them the *paso-portante*, in which the horse raises the fore and hind foot of each side simultaneously, causing a rapid see-saw motion, not agreeable to riders generally.

The saddles are modifications of the Mexican saddle, with high peaks, over which are thrown gaudily colored sheep-skins, here called "pillons," or "pellons." The equipment is not complete without a pair of holsters and pistols; and a Nicaraguan "caballero" is never so much in his element as when mounted on a spirited, champing horse, with a fanciful "pillon," jingling bit, and portentous spurs, his sombrero, covered with oiled silk, set jauntily on the side of his head, with a señora or two in a neighboring balcony to whom he may lift his hat as he passes by. The ordinary saddle, or "albarda," is a very cheap affair, and will hardly admit of a description which shall be comprehensible to the uninitiated reader. It is sometimes used from preference, but my experience would never lead me to recommend it to any but an inveterate enemy.

The road to the Malaccas passed through an unbroken forest, into which we struck almost as soon as we left the city. It was level, completely arched over with trees, whose dense foliage shuts off the sun; while cactuses, and shrubs whose fragrant flowers almost compensated for the thorns which pricked one's legs, and scratched one's hands in endeavoring to pluck them, fenced in the path with a wall of

verdure. Here and there we caught glimpses of the lake through a vista of trees, while at intervals, narrow, well-beaten paths branched off to the "hattos" and haciendas which were scattered over the country, away from the principal thoroughfares. We met men and boys driving or riding mules loaded with corn, *sacate* (grass), fruits, wood, and all the various articles of common use in the city, and occasionally a woman going in with a basket of chickens, sausages, coffee, or cacao, to be offered the next morning in the market. The entire stock, in some instances, was hardly worth a *medio* (sixpence), but this, it should be remembered, is no insignificant sum, in a country where a *rial* (twelve and a half cents) is the daily wages of a working man. All these people bowed with the grace of courtiers as we rode by; for all, from the highest to the lowest, from the little Indian boy who clasps his hands before him and says "buena dia, señor," to the lady who inclines her fan to her lips in token of recognition, have an apparently instinctive sense of politeness.

After riding some miles, we came to open fields, and passed by several fine estates surrounded by ditches and cactus fences in full bloom. The fourth was that which we came specially to visit. A man opened the gate, and we rode in and dismounted under the corridor of the house, which was a large, square structure, built of adobes, and tiled. The proprietor was not at home, and the family, in the unsettled state of the country, had retired to the city. We were nevertheless received with the greatest civility by the mayor-domo, who insisted that we were hot and thirsty, and wanted "*algo fresco*," and incontinently despatched a boy to get some fresh cocoa-nuts, the milk of which, when the nut is not too much matured, is transparent as water, and makes a cool and delightful beverage,—especially when a drop of brandy is mixed in "to take off the edge," and prevent fevers! The mayor-domo complained loudly of the condi-

tion of public affairs; now was the time for collecting the cacao, but no men were to be had; a few of those who had been employed on the estate were implicated in the insurrection, others had been pressed into the army, and still others had fled to the seclusion of the fields, to avoid the same fate. He had only half a dozen boys and some women to assist him, and they were "sin valor, nada," of small account. He showed us a large square space where the ground was beaten hard and swept clean, in which the nuts, after being removed from the husks, were spread on skins to dry. They required to be turned often to prevent moulding, and after becoming thoroughly dry, had to be carefully assorted, one by one, and packed in skins.

After resting awhile, we mounted again, and riding through a long gravelled walk, completely fenced in and arched over by magnificent mango trees, now literally golden with fruit, and through a vista of orange trees beyond, flanked by marañons, we entered the cacao plantation. It is difficult to describe these plantations; they more resemble beautiful parks of large trees, with broad walks running in every direction, all kept scrupulously neat and clean, than anything else in the United States with which they can be compared. The tree producing the fruit is known to botanists by the generic name of *Theobroma*, from the Greek, and signifying food for a god. It seldom rises higher than twenty feet; its leaves are large, oblong, and pointed, somewhat resembling those of the cherry tree, but infinitely larger; flowers small, and of a pale red color: they are surrounded by oval-pointed pods, grooved like a musk-melon, although much smaller; the nuts are very numerous, some pods containing as many as fifty; it produces two crops a-year, but is never without some pods on it. The trees are planted about fourteen feet apart, in a good soil. It is peculiarly necessary to defend this tree from the scorching rays of the sun, and at the same time sufficient warmth should be afforded for vegetation; this is done by

shading it with the plantain tree and the Erythrina. As the cacao advances in size, the plantain is cut down, the Erythrina, or *coral tree*, or as it is sometimes called "*cacao madre*," mother of the cacao, having attained sufficient height to protect it from the sun. It begins to bear at seven years old, and comes to perfection in about fifteen years. The coral tree grows to about the height of sixty feet, and entirely drops its leaves (in Nicaragua) about the end of March and beginning of April, and then becomes covered with flowers of a bright crimson, and shaped like a cimetar. At this season an extensive plain, covered with cacao plantations, is a magnificent object, when viewed from a height. The tops of the far-stretching forests of Erythrina then present the appearance of being clothed with flames. The cacao, it may be added, is indigenous to America, and became early an article of general consumption by the Spanish Americans, as it had been of the Indians from time immemorial. Subsequently to the Discovery it was introduced into the Canary and Phillipine islands by the Spaniards. It was called *thalcacahuatl* by the ancient Mexicans: amongst whom, as also among the natives of Central America, New Granada, and Peru, it was used as money, or a medium of exchange. It is still used as such in the markets of the cities of Granada and Leon. One hundred and fifty of the nuts were formerly valued at a dollar, which is, I believe, their present valuation. The cacao of Nicaragua is regarded as second to none, unless to that of Soconusco, which, during the Spanish dominion, was a monopoly of the crown. It is almost entirely consumed in the country, where it commands double the price of the Guayaquil, that which usually reaches the United States.[1] The taste for chocolate grows with its use, and

[1] Great confusion exists in the popular mind in respect to *Cocoa*, *Cacao*, and *Coca*, which are very generally confounded with each other, although differing as widely as almost any three products which it is possible to mention. *Cocoa* is the name given to a species of palm, producing the

hardly any person resides under the tropics for any length of time, to whom it does not become more an article of necessity than luxury. "He who has drunk one cup," says Cortez, in one of his letters, "can travel a whole day without any other food, especially in very hot climates; for chocolate is, by its nature, cold and refreshing." And the quaint old traveller in Central America, Gage, devotes a whole chapter to its praise, the manner of its use, and its effects on the human system. He asserts that *chocolate* "is an Indian name, compounded from *atl*, which in the Mexican language signifies *water*, and *choco-choco-choco*, the sound which water makes when stirred in a cup." He claims for it a most healthful influence, and bears his testimony as follows: "For myself, I must say, I used it for twelve years constantly, drinking one cup in the morning, another yet before dinner, between nine and ten of the clock; another within an hour or two after dinner, and another between four and five in the afternoon; and when I purposed to sit up late to study, I would take another cup about seven or eight at night, which would keep

cocoa-nut, which is too well known to need description. *Cacao*, the fruit of the cacao-tree, (*Theobroma cacao*,) described in the text. This fruit is described in the scientific books "as a large coriaceous capsule, having nearly the form of a cucumber, from the seeds of which the buttery and slightly bitter substance called cacao, or chocolate, is prepared." *Coca* is the name given to a shrub,(*Erythroxylon coca*,) which grows on the eastern declivities of the Andes of Peru and Bolivia; and is, to the natives of those countries, what opium and betel are to those of Southern Asia. Its leaves, which are chewed by the Indians, have such an effect in allaying hunger and thirst, that those who use them can subsist several days without any other nourishment. The shrub grows about six feet in height, with bright green leaves and white blossoms. When the leaves are ripe, that is to say, when they crack on being bent, they are gathered and dried. They are chewed or eaten with a little unslacked lime, to give them a relish. When constantly used, they produce some of the deleterious effects of opium.

me waking till about midnight. And if by chance I did neglect any of these accustomed hours, I presently found my stomach fainty. And with this custom I lived for twelve years in these parts, healthy, without any obstructions, or oppilations; not knowing what either Fever or Ague was." He, however, warns against the use of the cacao before preparation, for the reason that the simple nut, when eaten, as it often is by the Creole and Indian women, "doth notably obstruct and cause stoppings, and makes them look of a pale and earthy color, as do those that eat earthenware and pieces of lime wall."[1]

As I have already said, the cacao tree is so delicate, and so sensitive to exposure, that great care is required to preserve it during the early periods of its growth. It commences to bear in seven or eight years, and continues productive for from thirty to fifty years. Capital and time are therefore required to start an estate; but once established, it is easily enlarged by annual additions. One man, it is calcu-

[1] After giving expression to his enthusiasm on the subject of Cacao, Gage becomes philosophical, and discourses thus lucidly upon what, in these transcendental days, would be called "the dual nature, harmoniously blended," of this wonderful product:

"Cacao, although a Simple, contains the Quality of the four Elements; yet it is held to be cold and dry, *à prædomino*. It is also in the substance that rules these two Qualities, restringent and obstructive, of the Nature of the Element of the Earth. And as it is thus a mixed and not a Simple Element, it hath parts correspondent to the rest of the Elements; and particularly it partakes of those which correspond with the Element of Air,—that is, heat and moisture, which are governed by unctuous parts; there being drawn out of the *cacao* much Butter, which I have often seen drawn out of it by the Criolian women to oint their faces. * * And this is very conformable to reason, if we consider that every Element, be it never so simple, begets and produceth in the liver four Humors, not only differing in temper but substance; and begets more or less of that Humor, according as the Element hath more or fewer parts corresponding to the substance of that humor which is most ingendered."—*A New Survey of the West Indies*, p. 239.

lated, is able to take care of a thousand trees, and harvest their crop. As a consequence, cacao estates are more valuable than those of sugar, indigo, cotton, or cochineal. A good plantation, with fair attention, will yield an average annual product of twenty ounces of cacao to every tree, which for one thousand trees equals twelve hundred pounds. At the usual market rate of twenty-five dollars the quintal, this would give three hundred dollars per annum to each thousand trees and each laborer. Owing to a variety of causes,—some of the most important are obvious enough from what I have already said,—this yield is seldom obtained in Nicaragua; but may be when order is fully restored, and labor and its wages properly organized. No means exist for obtaining even an approximate estimate of this branch of production in Nicaragua, and I shall not therefore attempt to present any statistics on the subject, but proceed with my narrative.

I was delighted with the plantation, and after riding for an hour, until we got bewildered amongst the cross-walks and avenues, we began to thread our course back again. This was no easy matter, and we marched and countermarched for a long time before we struck the right path. This will not appear so surprising when I say that the plantation contained ninety-five thousand trees, which are valued at one dollar each.

Once in the main road, we paced slowly along on our return to the city, with that feeling of satisfaction which is always experienced after visiting an object that more than realizes the anticipation. I began to indulge the pleasing fancy that I might yet come to have a cacao plantation, which would be just the thing for a student or a man who loved his ease. It would require no expensive machinery, no long practice in manipulation of any kind; a boy could go through all the simple processes, and the whole might be left for a year or two without suffering the deterioration of sugar, rice, or cotton plantations. The summers in El Norte, and the win-

ters here amidst the cacao and orange, with only a few days of steaming between,—of course the thing was feasible.

While indulging such reveries as these, my horse, which was the fastest walker, had carried me some distance ahead of my companion, when turning a sharp corner, I came abruptly upon a party of armed men, reclining in easy attitudes under a large cebia tree. I at once drew rein, and they as suddenly leaped to their feet and formed in line. My companion at that moment coming up, hurried past me, in evident anxiety as to the character of the party, and I followed close at his heels. One who seemed to be in command, stepped forward as we approached, exclaiming, "Quien vive?" "Amigos," friends, replied my companion, cautiously avoiding the pass-word of the government, until he knew whether the party was a strolling band of "facciosos," or regular troops of the State. Meantime we continued to approach, as if in perfect confidence, until ordered to stop by the person in authority, who advanced a few steps and scrutinized us for some moments, and then, with the air of a man satisfied, motioned us to go on. As I passed, he lifted his hat in recognition, exclaiming, "Adios, Señor Ministro!"

It was a disguised scout from the garrison, on the lookout for a party of insurgents which was reported to be committing some excesses in this direction. I had been quite excited with the prospect of an adventure, and even indulged a vague hope that the one in command might prove to be Somoza himself; the upshot was, therefore, something of a disappointment. An interview with the robber chief, whose name carried terror through the whole country, and a handsome villain withal,—what a paragraph it would have made in these "Incidents of Travel!" I was clearly not in luck, but comforted myself with the possibility of a night assault upon the city, in anticipation of which Ben daily examined our armory, re-capped each formidable Colt, and had even prepared the proper timbers for barricading our house at a

moment's notice. I tried to work myself into a state of excitement, anxiety, and suspense, but it was of no use; we ate and drank inordinately, slept soundly, and altogether voted insurrections to be humbugs and bores.

There was great anxiety for the arrival of the commander-in-chief of the forces of the State, General Muñoz, with reinforcements, and we were amused for a week with rumors that he had just started from Leon with a thousand men,—was within two days' march,—and then that he had not started at all, that there was trouble in other departments,—in short, the city was in a fever, and full of reports; to which, after a few days, we ceased to listen, or listened only to laugh at them. We almost concurred with the Señorita Teresa in the wish that Somoza or General Muñoz would come,—she didn't care much which; for in either case this chronic state of alarm would be terminated. Upon the whole, she would rather prefer that the General should arrive, for he was the most polished man in the country, and withal would bring his military band, and then there would be no end to the evening music in the plaza, and the "*tertúlias*" and balls afterwards!

Between baths in the lake at early dawn, delicious snoozes in hammocks at noon, rides on the beach in the evening, dinners, visits, and a general overhauling of books, papers, and baggage, time passed rapidly and pleasantly enough for a week. During that period, I had put our sick countryman in funds, and he had started from Los Cocos, at the head of the lake, in a bongo owned at San Juan, for that port, there to wait a vessel for the United States. He came one afternoon to bid us good-bye, and as I looked in his pale face, momentarily flushed with the excitement of starting for home and friends, and heard his low, weak voice, I could not help thinking that the poor fellow would never reach his native land, and little supposed then that I should ever see him or hear from him again. But what was our surprise

when, some five or six days thereafter, he came trotting into the court on a sorry mule, and in most woful plight. His eyes were very large, and his whole appearance that of a man who bears important news. He did not wait to be questioned, but started off at once with "I've seen him, I've seen Somoza!" His voice had all come back again. We got the whole of the story directly, told with a *naïveté* and earnestness which in themselves, apart from the incidents, were convulsing. He had embarked in a small bongo, with a colored gentleman, his wife, and two children, as passengers,—catalogued in the recital as "an old nigger, a fat wench, and two naked picaninnies." The narrow *chopa* he had the satisfaction of sharing with these pleasant companions; but after one night's trial, he had arranged that he might occupy it alone in the afternoons, on condition that his fellow-passengers should have exclusive possession of it the rest of the time. The second night, therefore, he watched the stars and kicked his heels in the bow, and had only just commenced his afternoon's lease on the succeeding day, and began dreaming of home, when he was aroused by a great commotion and loud words. He found the sails all taken in, a boat full of armed men, with a swivel at the bow, alongside, and a number of others similarly manned close by. His colored companion was dumb, and of a dull ashy color, while the spouse, with a child in each arm, was prone and sobbing in the bottom of the boat. The crew were in a like plight, their teeth fairly chattering with alarm. Standing beside the mast was a tall, graceful man, with a feather in his hat, a red Spanish cloak hanging over one shoulder, a brace of naked pistols stuck in his belt, and a drawn sword in his hand, with its point resting on the rower's seat beside him, —who was questioning the trembling patron, with bent brow and eagle eyes, in a tone which our friend said would have drawn the truth from a stone. He comprehended at once that this was Somoza, and at first had a notion of taking

a shot at him, but thought better of it on the whole, and concluded to watch the turn of events, and so lay down again. The questioning was kept up for a very long time, as it appeared to him, while pretending to be asleep, but nevertheless keeping a sharp lookout. When he had finished, Somoza gave some order to his men, and stepped towards the *chopa*. Our poor friend thought it all up with him, but the insurgent chief only stooped down and took his arm, exclaiming, with a smile, in broken English, "How do, me amigo Americano?" Greatly relieved, our friend got up, whereupon Somoza dropped his sword, and throwing his arms around him, gave him an embrace, *la Española*, which made his back ache even now to think of. This was repeated several times, until the pain, overcoming all alarm, he cried in very agony, "No mas, señor, no mas!" No more, sir, no more! But this infliction only terminated to give place to another; for, taking both of our friend's hands in his own, with the gripe of a vice, he shook them until his arms were on the point of leaving his shoulders; delivering, meantime, an energetic oration, perfectly unintelligible to his auditor, who could only ejaculate, in broken syllables, "Si, señor! si, si, señor!!" yes, sir! yes, yes sir!!" This finished, Somoza took a splendid ring from his finger, and insisted on placing it on the hand of our friend, who, however, looking upon it in the double light of stolen property and a bribe, sturdily refused to accept it. He gathered that Somoza was going to attack San Carlos, and thus get possession of the arms and ammunition stored there, and of which he stood in much need. Somoza parted from him with much kindness, and after giving some orders in a threatening tone to the patron, retired to his own boat; whereupon the patron and his crew picked up their oars and pulled like mad, on the back track towards Granada. The last glimpse that was had of Somoza, he was standing in the stern of his boat, conspicuous amongst

his half-naked men, from his red cloak and dancing plume, worn after the fashion of the mailed conquistadors.

Somoza, we afterwards learned, affected great attachment to the Americans, and at an early stage of his operations, had sent a courier to our Consul, bearing a letter full of assurances of good feeling, and expressing his determination after "regulating the Government," of proceeding to San Juan to expel the English "ladrones." He was nevertheless accused of being in the English interest, and acting directly or indirectly under British instigation.

I have, in a preceding chapter, anticipated the result of Somoza's visit to San Carlos, in its capture and that of our fat friend the commandante. The capture was made without firing a gun, nor was it attended with excesses of any kind.

With the information thus obtained of the whereabouts and destination of Somoza, the long-expected attack on the city receded in the distant perspective, and I resolved to proceed at once to Leon, especially as I began to entertain suspicions that the obstacles in the way had been magnified with a view of keeping us in Granada as pledges for its safety. That afternoon, however, a courier, which I had despatched to Leon, returned, bringing positive intelligence that General Muñoz was on the road, and at that moment at the large Indian town of Masaya, half a day's march distant, where he had arrested a number of persons implicated in the insurrection, and, in virtue of extraordinary powers, conceded by Government, was engaged in trying them by the summary process of martial law. He brought advices from Mr. Consul Livingston, that a party of twenty-five volunteers from among the Californians stopping in Leon had been furnished with horses by the Government, and would set out in a day or two for Granada, to escort the Legation to the capital. He also brought a number of the Governmental decrees and proclamations, showing that the state authorities were taking the

most efficient means in their power to put down the insurgents and restore the peace of the State. Perhaps the mode of precedure cannot be better shown than by the following proclamations, decrees, and announcements, from the official bulletins, which will also serve to give an insight into the nature of the troubles which afflicted the State, and illustrate the style of composition, and the character of the appeals made use of by those in public station. The latter were of necessity adapted to touch the popular mind, and must therefore, give us some idea of its bent, the principles which it regarded as most important to be sustained, and the dangers most essential to be arrested. I have already intimated that the existing troubles had their primary origin in the virulence of the parties which divided the State; but that the proximate cause of the insurrection was the malefactor, Somoza, who had gathered a considerable number of reckless characters around him, and set all law at defiance. At first, and until overt acts were committed, such was the strength of party feeling, it is not impossible that the opposition to the Government was disposed to regard the movements of Somoza with indulgence, if not positive favor. But when it became apparent that his blows were aimed at all order, and that his real objects were revenge and plunder, party distinctions were forgotten; the opposition no longer looked upon his acts in the simple light of being embarrassing to the Government, but as directed against themselves and the body politic, and, forgetting all their previous predilections, heartily seconded the measures which were adopted to restore the public peace.

In one of the public papers of the time it was said:

"In every republic, parties have always existed, and always will exist. It is right and necessary that they should, in order to act as checks one on the other, and thus protect the public welfare. Honestly differing in their views of certain measures of national policy, and in the decision of which every citizen must feel the deepest interest, we have long had, in

Nicaragua, two parties, bearing the somewhat extraordinary names of '*Timbucos*' and '*Calandracas*.' So far from regarding this circumstance as a thing to be deplored, the well-wishers of the State have witnessed it with satisfaction, as showing that the people at large comprehended the nature of republican institutions, and the necessity of deciding for themselves, upon whatever, of a public nature, might affect them or their interests. We have seen one of these parties, after a long struggle, in which arguments were substituted for bayonets, and ballots for bullets, succeeding the other, and reforming the fundamental law of the State, while the other, as in duty bound, yielded peaceably to the will of the majority. The laborer pursued his avocations undisturbed while this peaceable revolution was going on; the merchant continued his legitimate business; no blood was spilled, no women widowed, or children rendered fatherless.

"The monstrous faction which now threatens the State belongs to no party; it is a Vandalic horde, aiming, by vile means, at unwarrantable ends, and directing its efforts against the Government, not because of the policy of that Government, but because it is charged with the execution and vindication of the laws which this faction would annul and destroy! It is made up of enemies of order, of liberty, and of humanity. Let not former differences of opinion blind men to the real enormity of the insurrection; let no party favor this attempt to overturn not only the existing, but all governments, and plant anarchy in the soil of peace. When the country is threatened, we are neither 'Timbucos' nor 'Calandracas,' but Nicaraguans. We cannot believe that this faction, which has no principles, no policy, no moral incentives to action, and whose constant object is the destruction of society, can find sympathy or support, except amongst assassins and robbers."

The first step taken by the Government, upon ascertaining the formidable character of the insurrection, is indicated below.

OFFICIAL BULLETIN.

LEON, JUNE 19, 1849.

"No man shall be molested or persecuted on account of his opinions, of whatever nature they may be, provided that he does not by any overt act infringe the laws." —*Art.* 30 *of the Constitution.*

"Every one has seen with horror the devastation which has followed in the steps of the barbarous Bernabe Somoza since his arrival in the

town of St. George, in the Department Meridional. He burned and desolated its haciendas, and gave the city of Rivas to the flames, at the same time that, with the horde that follows him, he attacked the garrison of the line, and the various patriots assembled there, who, after having sustained a siege of eleven days, in the most heroic manner, were compelled to retreat;—therefore, the Supreme Government, in discharge of the duties imposed upon it by humanity, religion, and the country, has issued the following extraordinary decrees:

"God, Union, Liberty."

Department of War;
House of the Government, Leon, June 19, 1849.

"*To the General-in-Chief, Commanding the Regular Forces of the State:*

"Sir: The Supreme Executive Power has ordered me to communicate to you the following decrees for execution: BUITRAGO."

No. 1.

"It having become necessary to the well-being of the State to put an end to the anarchical movements which threaten with destruction the persons and properties of the Departments Oriental and Meridional, and which now disturb the general peace, therefore, in view of this peremptory exigency, and in order to save the liberty of the people, and to put the State in a position to defend its independence and integrity, now placed in extreme danger by the refusal of the British Government to listen to our claims of redress against the usurpation of the most precious part of our territories, in conformity with Art. 48, Sec. 9, of the Constitution, it has been and is

DECREED:

"Art. 1. All citizens of Nicaragua, from the ages of sixteen to fifty years, are required by the fundamental law to take up arms in support of the public order and territorial integrity of the State, excepting only the clergy, and those who, by some physical defect, are absolutely incapacitated for military service.

"Art. 2. They are therefore required to present themselves for enrolment, with their equipments, and all horses and mules which they may possess, before the chief of the forces of the line in this city, or before the legionary commanders in the departments.

"Art. 3. The horses and mules as aforesaid of those who do not present themselves, are liable to be seized by detachments of troops sent out for

that purpose, and the owners will incur the penalty, in case they are lost, of being excluded from recovering their value, as provided by Art. 173, Sec. 1, of the Constitution, besides being themselves subject to the penalties prescribed by Art. 104 of the penal code.

"ART. 4. The forces which may be enrolled shall hold themselves in readiness to move whenever and wherever required.

"Given in Leon this 19th of June, 1849.

"NORBERTO RAMIREZ."

No. 2.

"To save the State from anarchy, and to enable it to defend its territorial integrity, in compliance with duty, and in use of constitutional power, it is

DECREED:

ART. 1. That the General in Chief, Don Jose Trinidad Muñoz, is fully authorized to put an end to the existing insurrection, and to restore complete order, as also to place the State in an attitude to defend its territorial integrity; his orders are therefore to be punctually executed by the legionary commanders, and exactly complied with by the commissaries, not only for ordinary but extraordinary expenses.

Given in Leon, this 19th of June, 1849.

NORBERTO RAMIREZ.

Decrees were also issued for the collection of an extraordinary tax, and requiring persons entering the various towns to procure passports. The proclamation of the Supreme Director, Ramirez, was a well written appeal to the patriotism of the people, concluding as follows:

"No good object can be attained by disturbing the public peace, and the misguided men who have joined in these lawless movements forget that their interests are identical with those of all other citizens; forget that their conduct must destroy every social and civil privilege, and plunge society into its savage, chaotic state, when might shall subvert right; and when life, liberty, nor possessions are secure. Hatred begets hatred, and vengeance, vengeance; and they who strike against the wholesome restraints of law, will themselves be stricken down in its fall.

"People of Nicaragua, by your choice I have been placed in a position where my authority is individually greater than yours; but your blood

has as much value as mine; my interests are yours, and those of the nation. Let me then, both as a magistrate and a citizen, conjure you, in the name of humanity, by our hopes of future prosperity, and on behalf of our country, to rally to the support of the constitution and the laws, and thus confound our enemies, and realize the blessings which shall flow from peace and the maintenance of public order."

The address of the General in Chief of the State to his soldiers, furnishes a very favorable example of the style of such documents in Central America; and its introduction will, in this respect at least, prove interesting.

"Soldiers!

"The honored standard of order, which you have hitherto so gloriously sustained, is again attacked. Forty intrepid men of your number covered themselves with glory, in maintaining the city of Rivas against overwhelming numbers; yielding only with their lives the trust confided to their care. Since their lamented fall, over which a bereaved country is still weeping, there has been no check on the wanton atrocities of the robbers and Vandals who overcame them. The devastation which moves with the insurgents will extend all over the State, if not opposed by the honor, valor, and patriotism you have so conspicuously exhibited in other days. What will become of our beautiful country, companions in arms, if this turbulence, which finds its food in blood and ashes, does not encounter, in its savage progress, the invincible obstacle of your courage?

"You are called upon to guard the supreme powers of the State, as you have sworn to do at the foot of your flag. Your loyalty and heroism have been and are still the shield of the country, not less than the terror of those who compass its destruction and your enslavement. The soul of the hero of Rivas, the valiant Martinez, will glory in your triumph over the enemies of the country for which he died!

"Fellow Citizens, Friends of Society!

"Social order is attacked; the lava of sanguinary destruction threatens to overflow our dearest interests. The assassin of the honored Venerio, and of the innocent Solorio, the destroyer of the pacific Rivas, and the hated cause of innumerable other misfortunes, has seduced a portion of the unreflecting people of the department Meridional from their allegiance, and is leading them into the direst iniquities, while, like another Nero, he revels above the ruins of the capitol of that unfortunate department. But if your valor and patriotism unite to support the cause of order, they

will interpose an efficient obstacle to the dangers which threaten us, and turn back in confusion the enemies of the State.

"The supreme government, the centre of order, has invested me with the largest authority to act for its support; and with your effective aid, I go with my soldiers to fulfill the duties with which I am charged. The country asks, if it need be, the lives of her sons; our wives, mothers, and children look to you in this emergency for the security of their liberty and lives!

JOSE TRINIDAD MUNOZ.

"HEAD-QUARTERS, JUNE 21, 1849."

The subjoined is also a specimen of the announcements and appeals made by the editors of the official Bulletin, with the view to rouse the patriotism of the people, and concentrate their indignation against the insurgents.

"We denounced before the people, in a previous number, the incendiarism, pillage, and bloodshed, with which that most ferocious barbarian, (*antropofago,*) Bernabe Somoza, had desolated the department Meridional; but those crimes were as nothing in comparison with the most unheard-of outrages and unparalleled barbarisms which he has more recently committed in that important section of the State. He has spared neither age nor sex, not even the unresisting wounded, nor the corpses of the dead; and with impious hand has seized upon the sacred vessels in the temple of the God of Justice, who, penetrating at a single glance the hearts of men, and always as just as inexorable in the end, will as assuredly save the virtuous, as he will, with his terrible lightnings, strike down the wicked and the criminal. In evidence of the new and almost incredible horrors which have filled up the cup of sorrow, for all those who possess souls and human sympathies, we publish the following account, communicated by Don Trinidad Salazar, commandant in the department Oriental, to the General-in-chief:

"'I have positive news from Rivas, that Somoza is still in that city, perpetrating every excess. He has shot all the wounded; robbed even the sacred vessels in the churches, and is on the eve of entirely burning the city. He has disinterred the body of Lieut. Col. Martinez, and dragged it naked through the streets. In short, these are but few examples of the thousand horrible acts committed by this barbarous man. Within an hour has died in this city, from the effects of his wounds, our friend, the brave Capt. Santos Ramirez, notwithstanding every means were ex-

hausted to save him; and it only remains for me to pay his remains their last sad honors.'

"How terrible to the imagination, how disgraceful to humanity, are deeds like these, committed on the spot consecrated by the blood of the hero and Christian, the honored Don Manuel Antonio de la Cerda, first chief of Nicaragua, whose sacred corpse was also thus outraged in those days of barbarism which have been looked back to with horror, but which bear no parallel to those now passing in that unfortunate department.

"But those noble soldiers, the brave Martinez and Ramirez, shall receive the rites of sepulchre in our hearts. There we will engrave deep their memories. Their conduct shall be forever an example to our soldiers, to the friends of humanity, and the admirers of true honor. Our breasts shall be the temples where they shall receive the tribute of our gratitude, and immortal glory. God's justice and the sword of the violated laws have gone forth to avenge their blood!"

Having received these documents and the information accompanying them, I relinquished the idea of an immediate departure, and determined to wait for the arrival of the Californian escort. The news of the General's approach created great joy; and the bells were rung and guns fired in token of satisfaction. He was expected to arrive the next day; and that evening a "banda" was published, requiring the houses on the principal streets and on the plaza to be decorated, and everything put in order to receive him. The publication of the "banda" was a novelty to us. It was done in this wise: a party of soldiers, preceded by a drum and fife, and a municipal officer, marched through all the principal streets, stopping at each corner, when the music ceased, and the officer took off his hat and read the proclamation aloud, while the people thrust out their heads and listened. We laughed at first at this new mode of publishing the laws, but in the end came to regard it as not a bad idea.

That evening, there being no longer fear of the "facciosos," we had no difficulty in making up a large riding party for the Laguna de Salinas, distant about four miles from the city, which was represented to us as being lower than lake Nica-

ragua, salt, and shut in by perpendicular rocks. We followed the "camino real," in the direction of Leon, for a short distance, and then turned off on a narrow mule path, amongst the trees and bushes. It was very evident that the "caballeros" who accompanied us were determined to show us a specimen of their horsemanship, and rode at breakneck pace, keeping a bright lookout for the trunks and branches of the trees, now bending to their horses' necks to escape the latter, and now throwing their feet dextrously out of the stirrups, to avoid hitting the former. Thanks to early habits of life, this was no very severe trial to me, and I kept even pace with the rest, to their evident surprise, and the strengthening of their conviction that the Yankees were "up" to everything. We passed, here and there, a cane hut, surrounded by plantain trees, corn-fields, and patches of yucas, over ridges of volcanic scoriæ, covered only with grass, down into ravines with a scramble, and out again with a leap, and in half an hour came to the brink of the lake. I dismounted, and pushed through the trees and bushes to the edge of the precipice, and saw, far down, hundreds of feet below me, the glistening waters of the lake, surrounded on all sides by the same bare, blistered, black walls, with a rim of verdure skirting the water's edge. Mounting again, we rode a little further, to the sole place of descent, in part natural, but chiefly artificial. A narrow path, half-cut, half-worn, in the rock, wound down before us, something after the manner of the winding stairways in monumental columns, only not so wide. The horses picked their way cautiously, avoiding the loose stones, while the rider had enough to do to prevent his legs from being jammed against the wall of rock on either hand. A man had previously been sent ahead, to see that the way was clear, for there is no turning around in this narrow passage, which no doubt owes its origin to the aborigines, and is hardly wide enough to admit the passage of a horse. This cut passed, we came to a place

where the fallen debris and rocks made a kind of shelf or terrace. Here we left our horses, the declivity below being very steep, and the rocks slippery withal, and proceeded on foot,—leaping from one stone to the other, and catching at bushes and saplings to check our descent. We soon came to the shore of the lake, where, beyond a line or belt of bushes, was a narrow beach of fine sand. The water was very clear and limpid, but had a sulphury or yellowish green color where it was deeper, a little distance from the shore. It was slightly salt to the taste, from the minerals held in solution. We observed some small fishes, and were told that there were alligators, but how they got here was a mystery; as I have already said, the lake is surrounded by absolutely precipitous walls of rock, several hundred feet in height, with no practicable descent for man or beast, except at this point. It was evident enough that the lake was of volcanic origin; but in what way formed, was not so clear. The black and frowning rocks seemed to imply that it was an ancient crater; but this conclusion was somewhat shaken by the fact that, from the plain, upon the western side of the lake, rose a conical hill, or small mountain, which had been a volcano, and exhibited a crater. Had the earth sunk suddenly here, during some terrible convulsion of nature? "Quien sabe?" We afterwards found numerous other lakes, equally extraordinary, and some of considerably larger size. This one, called in the aboriginal language, Lendiri, was, I should think, about three miles in circumference.[1] The trees grew to the very edge of the precipice, and vines and creepers hung in waving festoons down its rugged sides; altogether forming an impressive picture. Our appreciation of it was not a

[1] Oviedo (1529) says of this lake, "In the province of Diria is another lake, the water of which is salt, like that of the sea; and the flavor of the fish, which it produces in abundance, is far superior to that of the other fresh water lakes of which I have spoken. It is about a league and a half, or two leagues, from Granada, or Salteba"

little enhanced by the feeling, half of curiosity and half of awe, which every one must experience upon witnessing, for the first time, the terrible effects of volcanic forces, and which no familiarity ever materially weakens.

We were hot, weary, and thirsty, when we had clambered again to where our horses were fastened, and emptied a flask of "agua ardiente" and water, with which one of the party had considerately supplied himself, in much less time than it takes me to make the confession, and with a satisfaction which I shall not attempt to describe. We returned leisurely, for the shades of evening were falling, and the narrow path was much obscured by the trees. It was late when we reached the city, which had now recovered from the chilling influences of impending danger, and was gay and cheerful. The streets were thronged with noisy children, and the señoras and señoritas were all seated in the doorways or in the balconied windows, in quiet enjoyment of the cool evening breeze, which swung the lamps, suspended in front of each house, slowly to and fro. There seemed to be a sense of the luxury of mere existence among the inhabitants, which the traveller looks for in vain except under the tropics, and which there appears to be in perfect harmony with nature.

We had scarcely entered the main street, when my companions suddenly stopped short, and taking off their hats, turned back again. Without comprehending fully the reason, I did the same. The next moment, however, I heard the tinkling of a bell, and looking around the corner, saw a procession of persons with uncovered heads, each bearing a light, preceded by a boy ringing a bell, who was followed by some men playing on violins, and a guard of soldiers surrounding four persons who supported, with silver rods, a crimson silken canopy, over a priest dressed in his robes, and carrying the host. The children fled to the sides of the street and fell on their knees, as did also all the inhabitants, upon the approach of the procession, which was pro-

ceeding to the house of some one dangerously ill, or dying. We stood in the cross street, with uncovered heads, as it passed by. It was only a few years before that a party of foreigners had been torn from their horses and otherwise maltreated, because they did not dismount and kneel on an occasion like this. The people, however, had now become comparatively enlightened and liberal, and exacted nothing beyond a decent respect for their religious notions and ceremonies. It looked rather strangely to see a file of soldiers, with glancing bayonets, surrounding a priest bent on such a mission; but either to insure proper respect, or to show it, the guard is never omitted, if men and muskets are, by any possibility, to be found. Sometimes the priest rides in a lumbering carriage, or is carried in a litter or chair, on men's shoulders.

That night, until eight o'clock there was a firing of "bombas" in the plaza, and general demonstrations of satisfaction everywhere, to say nothing of great preparations for the morrow, the day announced for the arrival of General Muñoz and his veteranos. Preceding that event, and the recital of what followed, it will not be uninteresting to turn for a moment to the early history of Granada, which was a city grown, long before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth, and before Hudson entered the bay of New York.

CHAPTER VI.

DISCOVERY OF NICARAGUA IN 1522; GIL GONZALES DE AVILA, AND HIS MARCH INTO THE COUNTRY; LANDS AT NICOYA; REACHES NICARAGUA AND HAS AN INTERVIEW WITH ITS CAZIQUE; IS CLOSELY QUESTIONED; MARCHES TO DIRIANGA, WHERE HE IS AT FIRST RECEIVED, BUT AFTERWARDS ATTACKED AND FORCED TO RETREAT; PECULIARITIES OF THE ABORIGINES; THEIR WEALTH; ARRIVAL OF FRANCISCO HERNANDEZ DE CORDOVA; HE SUBDUES THE COUNTRY, AND FOUNDS THE CITIES OF GRANADA AND LEON; RETURN OF GONZALES; QUARRELS BETWEEN THE CONQUERORS; PEDRO ARIAS DE AVILA THE FIRST GOVERNOR OF NICARAGUA; HIS DEATH; IS SUCCEEDED BY RODERIGO DE CONTRERAS; HIS SON, HERNANDEZ DE CONTRERAS, REBELS AGAINST SPAIN; MEDITATES THE ENTIRE INDEPENDENCE OF ALL SPANISH AMERICA ON THE PACIFIC; SUCCEEDS IN CARRYING NICARAGUA; SAILS FOR PANAMA; CAPTURES IT; MARCHES ON NOMBRE DE DIOS, BUT DIES ON THE WAY; FAILURE OF HIS DARING AND GIGANTIC PROJECT; SUBSEQEUNT INCORPORATION OF NICARAGUA IN THE VICE-ROYALTY OF GUATEMALA.—THE CITY OF GRANADA IN 1665, BY THOMAS GAGE, AN ENGLISH MONK; NICARAGUA CALLED "MAHOMET'S PARADISE;" THE IMPORTANCE OF GRANADA AT THAT PERIOD; SUBSEQUENT ATTACK BY THE PIRATES IN 1668; IS BURNT; THEIR ACCOUNT OF IT; THE SITE OF GRANADA; ELIGIBILITY OF ITS POSITION; POPULATION; COMMERCE; FOREIGN MERCHANTS; PROSPECTIVE IMPORTANCE.—LAKE NICARAGUA; ITS DISCOVERY AND EXPLORATION; INTERESTING ACCOUNT OF IT BY THE CHRONICLER OVIEDO, WRITTEN IN 1541; ITS OUTLET DISCOVERED BY CAPTAIN DIEGO MACHUCA; THE WILD BEASTS ON ITS SHORES; THE LAGUNA OF SONGOZANA; SHARKS IN THE LAKE, THEIR RAPACITY; SUPPOSED TIDES IN THE LAKE; EXPLANATION OF THE PHENOMENON.

THE first Spaniard who penetrated into Nicaragua, was Gil Gonzales de Avila, in the year 1522. He sailed from Panama, and landed somewhere upon the shore of the Gulf of Nicoya, probably in the southern department of Nicaragua, now bearing the name of Nicoya, or Guanacaste. With four horses and a hundred followers, he advanced to the north-

ward over land, meeting in his progress with several petty chiefs, and finally came to the territories of a powerful cazique called *Nicoya*, who, says Peter Martyr, "courteously entertained him, and gave him fourteen thousand pieces of eight in gold thirteen carats fine, and six idols of the same metal, each a span long," in return for which, adds Herrara, Gonzales "gave him some Spanish toys, and baptized him and all his subjects, being six thousand in number."

Here Gonzales heard of a powerful chief named Nicaragua, and proceeding fifty leagues to the northward, arrived in his territories, which were between the lake of Nicaragua and the sea, comprising the district of which the city of Nicaragua or Rivas is now the capital, and which occupies the site of the aboriginal town. To this chief, Peter Martyr tells us, De Avila sent the same message which "our men were wont to deliver to the rest of the Indian kings, before they would press them, that is to say, that they should become Christians, and admit their subjection to the King of Spain, if they did not which, then war and violence would be used against them." But Nicaragua, it appears, had heard of the "sharpness of the Spanish swords," and received Gonzales courteously and with great state, presenting him with "twenty-five thousand pieces of eight in gold, many garments, and plumes of feathers." Gonzales prevailed upon him to be baptized, as he accordingly was, with nine thousand of his subjects. Their sole objection to the rite was the prohibition of making war, and "of dancing when they were drunk," alleging that "they did nobody harm thereby, and that they could not quit their colors, weapons, and plumes of feathers, and let the women go to war, whilst they applied themselves to spin, weave, and dig, which belonged to the females and slaves." Nicaragua asked many shrewd questions of the Spaniards, one of which was, "why so few men coveted so much gold?" "Gonzales being a discreet man,"

observes Herrara, "gave such answers as satisfied him," although they have not been preserved.[1]

After much persuasion Nicaragua consented that "the idols which he worshipped should be cast down, and a cross set up in the temple, which was hung with fine cotton cloths: and thus the country was converted!"

From the territories of this chief, Gonzales, being everywhere kindly received, penetrated the country in various directions, and saw many towns, which, says Herrara, "though not large, were good and populous;[2] and multitudes flocked along the ways to see the Spanish beards, and habits, and their horses, which were so strange to them." While thus engaged, he encountered a warlike cazique, called *Diriangan*, a name that is perpetuated in that of the existing towns of *Diriambi*, *Diriomo*, and *Nindiri*, situated about fifty miles to the north-westward of Nicaragua. This chief was attended by five hundred men, with seventeen women, who wore many gold plates. They were drawn up in order, but

[1] Old Peter Martyr gives quite a minute account of the interview between Gonzales and Nicaragua, calculated to give a very high opinion of the shrewdness of the latter. He inquired about a flood, and how the Spaniards got their information on religious matters from heaven, who brought it, and whether he came down on a rainbow or otherwise; about "the sun, and moon, and stars, and of their motion, quality, distance, and effects!" All these things were noted down on the spot, by Cerezeda, the king's treasurer, who also affirms that Nicaragua was curious about the cause of day and night, and the blowing of the winds, "which Gonzales answered to the best of his ability, commending the rest to God." Gonzales had a long argument with him to prove that his idols were representatives of devils, and warned him in a style not yet wholly obsolete, to avoid them, "lest he should be violently carried away by them from eternal delights to perpetual torments and miserable woes, and be made the companion of the damned." To all of these things the Indians did not offer particular objection, but when they came to talk about temporal affairs, "they made a wry mouth."

[2] Peter Martyr says that he found "six villages, every one of which had two thousand houses a-piece."—"*De Novo Orbe*," *Decade* vi. p. 237.

without arms, "with ten colors, and trumpets after their fashion." When Gonzales came near, the colors were spread, and the cazique touched his hand, as did also each of his followers; every man presenting him, at the same time, with one or two turkeys, and each woman with "twenty golden plates, fourteen carats fine, each weighing eighteen pieces of eight, and upwards."

Gonzales endeavored to persuade Diriangan to become a Christian; but the chief demanded three days to consult upon the subject "with his women and priests." The Spaniards soon suspected that this was a *ruse*, and that it was his design to gather forces to attack and destroy them. In this they were not mistaken, for on the 17th of April, 1522, a body of several thousand Indians, "armed after their manner with cotton armor, head pieces, targets, wooden swords, bows, arrows, and darts, fell upon the Spaniards," and had it not been for the timely notice of a confederate Indian, would inevitably have destroyed them. The strangers returned to the market place, and received the onset of the Indians there. Several of the Spaniards were knocked down: for it seems that here, as in Mexico, it was rather the desire of the natives to capture than kill their enemies, in order to offer the prisoners as sacrifices to their gods. The Spanish horse, in this, as in a thousand other instances, saved them from defeat, driving back the Indians in great terror.[1] Gonzales, considering the smallness of his force, resolved, upon this event, to retire from the country. In passing the town of their former entertainer, Nicaragua, they were however attacked, but nevertheless succeeded in making good their retreat. "The

[1] Peter Martyr tells us that the Indians were not less afraid of men with beards than of the horses, and that therefore, to produce the greatest possible effect, Gonzales made artificial beards "from the powlinges of their heads, for twenty-five beardless youths which he had with him, to the end that the number of bearded men might appear the more, and be the more terrible to the barbarians."—"*De Novo Orbe*," *Decade* vi. p. 240.

Spaniards," adds Herrara, "gave a mighty account of the country upon their return to Panama; for which reason Pedro de Arias, resolved to found a colony there." He accordingly soon after despatched Francisco Hernández de Cordova, who, in 1522, founded the city of Granada upon the Lake of Nicaragua, and subsequently, in the same year, the city of Leon, upon the Lake of Leon, or Managua. Cordova erected a fort at Granada for its protection, but it is hardly to be supposed that the ruined works on the shore of the lake are the remains of this structure.

Gonzales, who had gone to Spain soon after his discovery, to procure the means of conquering and settling the country, finding himself anticipated by Cordova, raised a force and entering Honduras by the valley of Olancho, from the Bay of Honduras, marched upon the towns established by the latter. The consequences were many battles, and much disturbance and turmoil, exceeding anything which had previously resulted from the jealousies and rivalries of the conquerors, in America. Very little regard was paid to the mother country or its directions; in fact, after the death of Pedro Arias de Avila, who was the first governor of the country, Rodrigo de Contreras, his son-in-law, who succeeded him, openly disregarded the order of the crown, which prohibited its officers from holding the Indians as property. For this charges were preferred against him, and he went to Spain to vindicate himself in the "Audiencia Real." In his absence, his son, Hernández de Contreras, resenting his father's treatment, openly revolted. Their first victim was Antonio de Valdivieso, the bishop of Nicaragua, whose portrait is still preserved in the great cathedral at Leon. The insurgents were successful in gaining complete possession of the country; but not satisfied with this, they seized some vessels in the port of Realejo, and embarked for Panama, with a view of extending their conquests in that direction, and ultimately of seizing upon Peru. Hernández, in short,

conceived the idea of becoming king of the continent, and ruler of the South Sea. He attacked and captured Panama; but on his way to reduce Nombre de Dios, encountered misfortunes which ended in his death. Thus terminated this bold and magnificent design; the magnitude of which appalled the King of Spain, and which, at one moment, seemed on the eve of a successful consummation. The anniversary of Hernández's death, on the 23d of April, 1549, was celebrated with great solemnity in the Cathedral of Panama, until the period of the independence from Spain.

It is not necessary, nor would it be particularly interesting, to trace the early history of Nicaragua further. In due time, it was organized as a province in the Kingdom or Captain Generalcy of Guatemala, and governed by a Governor Intendant, appointed by the crown, but subject to the Captain General of Guatemala, and so remained until its emancipation in 1823. At that time Granada was among the first cities to declare in favor of republicanism, and has always, in the partisan struggles which have followed, been on the liberal side, as opposed to the servile, oligarchical, or monarchical faction, whose machinations have kept the country in a state of constant alarm, and which is still the enemy of its peace.

Thomas Gage, an English monk, who went through Nicaragua in 1665, has left us a brief but interesting account of the country, which he calls "Mahomet's Paradise, from its exceeding goodness." At that time there were in the city of Granada two cloisters of Mercenarian and Franciscan friars, and "one parish church, which was a cathedral, for the Bishop of Leon did almost constantly reside there." The houses, he says, were fairer than those of Leon, and the merchants enjoyed great wealth. They carried on trade directly with Guatemala, Honduras, and San Salvador, as also with Panama, Carthagena, and Peru. At the time of sending away their vessels, ("frigats," as Gage calls them,) the city

was one of the richest in all North America. The king's treasure from Guatemala and Mexico was often sent this way, when the Hollanders and other enemies infested the Gulf of Mexico. Gage tells us that while he was there, "in one day there entered six *Requas*, (which were each at least three hundred mules,) from San Salvador and Honduras alone, laden with indigo, cochineal, and hides; and two days after from Guatemala came in three more, one laden with silver, (which was the king's tribute,) another with sugar, and the other with indigo."[1] Respecting the "frigats" of which Gage speaks, we shall have more to say elsewhere. They generally sailed for Carthagena, but sometimes directly for Spain. They were occasionally intercepted by English and Dutch vessels cruising around the mouth of "El Desaguadero," or the San Juan, and the fear of this, observes the quaint old traveller, "did make the merchants tremble and sweat with a cold sweat."

Granada, in common with all the Spanish cities on the Pacific declivity of the continent, suffered much, at a later period, from the pirates. In 1686 it was attacked by a party from the combined French and English bucaneers then in the South Sea, and sacked. They landed on the seventh of April in that year, on the coast of the Pacific, in number three hundred and forty-five men. They travelled only at night, with a view of surprising the town. De Lussan, who was of the party, records the adventure. He says that on the ninth of the month, two days after their departure from the coast, the fatigue which they had undergone, and the sharp hunger which pressed them, obliged them to halt at a great sugar plantation, about four leagues from Granada, and on the way thither. It belonged to a Knight of St. James, who, however, escaped being taken prisoner, for the excellent reason assigned by the chronicler, viz.: "our leggs at

[1] "A New Survey of the West Indies," p. 421.

that time being much more disposed to rest than run after him." Upon coming near to the town, they discovered that their approach was known, and saw what De Lussan calls "two ships upon Lake Nicaragua," laden with the effects of the retreating inhabitants. They now proceeded with more caution, and upon capturing a prisoner found out that a portion of the inhabitants remained, and had entrenched themselves in the Place of Arms, or Plaza, which was guarded with fourteen pieces of cannon, and "six petereroes." This information, continues the worthy De Lussan, "would doubtless have terrified any but freebooters, but did not retard our design one minute, nor hinder us. About two in the afternoon of the same day, we came up to the town, where at one entrance into the suburbs we met a strong party lying in ambush for us, whom, after an hour's engagement, we fell with that fury on, that we made our way over all their bellies, with the loss of but one man on our side, and from thence entered the town, where we made a halt to wait for the answer of several of our company, whom we had detached to go round and take observation of a fort which we saw in a direct line with the street by which we entered." The reconnoitering over, and the plan of attack laid out with all military precision, the freebooters "exhorted each other to fall on bravely, and advanced at a good round pace to the attack." When they had got within cannon shot of the works, they were fired on, but at every discharge the pirates "saluted them down to the ground, by which means the shot went harmlessly over." This excellent practical joke the Spaniards met by false priming, "to the end that the pirates might raise their bodies after the sham was over," and then receive the real discharge. The pirates then broke into the houses and made their approaches through the walls, from one to the other; and finally came sufficiently near to use their fire-arms and hand grenades, and being superior in numbers, and withal well used to hard fighting, they soon succeeded in making them-

selves masters of the work. Upon the side of the pirates four men were killed and eight wounded, which, De Lussan complacently observes, "was in truth very cheap." They then went to the great church and piously sang the *Te Deum*, fixed their sentinels, and the Court of Guard, (which was probably some kind of commission to take charge of the plunder,) in the strong-built houses," and afterwards went out to gather in the booty. But their victory was a barren one, for they only found "a few goods and some provisions."

Much disappointed, they sent out parties to collect the treasures which they conceived might be hidden on the estates outside of the city, but with no better success, for they came back, as De Lussan classically observes, "*re infecta.*" They then caught a woman, whom they sent to the Spaniards with a demand for a ransom for the town, and a threat of burning the same in case their requisition was not complied with. The inhabitants were not so easily frightened, and did not trouble themselves to give an answer, whereupon the pirates "set fire to the houses out of mere spite and revenge."

While here, the pirates, wearied of their laborious and perilous life, indulged hopes of returning, through Lake Nicaragua, to Europe. But, in their own words, "the term of dangers and miseries which their destiny had in store for them was not yet come, and they could not take advantage of the favorable opportunity which now offered to get out of these parts of the world, which, though very charming and agreeable to those who were settled there, yet did not appear so to a handful of men, without shipping, the most part of the time without victuals, and wandering amidst a multitude of enemies, against whom they were obliged to be continually on their guard." So they fell back, with infinite trouble and danger, to the coast, being obliged to contest every foot of the ground. They embarked again and sailed for Realejo, which they captured, and subsequently took Pueblo Viejo

and Chinendaga, and even made a descent on Leon. These same men, after further exploits on the coast, made a forced march across the continent, from the Gulf of Fonseca to Cape Gracios a Dios, through the northern department of Nicaragua (Segovia) and Honduras.

De Lussan describes the city of Granada, at the time of his visit, as a large and spacious town, with "stately churches and houses, well enough built, besides several religious establishments, both for men and women." Around the city "were a great many fine sugar plantations, which were more like unto so many villages than single plantations."

The site of Granada is admirably chosen. It occupies a gentle slope, descending towards the lake, which here forms a beautiful and partially protected bay, called the bay of Granada. Upon one side rises the great volcano of Momobacho, while behind are the undulating hills and ridges of land which intervene between the lake and the Pacific. The position is, in fact, the only eligible one on the western shore of the lake, near its head, where any considerable town could be built, due regard being had to space, salubrity, and convenience for trade. And while Leon, from the circumstances that it was almost immediately established as the seat of government, and was built in a more fertile and populous district, has preserved a larger population and a greater number of imposing public edifices, Granada has always held a higher place in respect of trade. Through it, from the earliest period, has been conducted the principal part of the commerce of the country, besides a portion of that of the adjacent provinces and States. It has not suffered so much from violence as the political capital; and although subject to the same influences which have depressed the country at large, it has felt them less. Wealth has, in consequence, concentrated here to a considerable extent, and its commercial relations have led to the introduction of many foreign customs, without, however, materially changing its essential Central

American type. More foreigners have, from time to time, established themselves here, than in all the rest of the State. Some of them, after accumulating large fortunes, have returned to their native lands, while others, from habit or inclination, have remained, and almost entirely assimilated themselves to the native population.

The population of Granada is now estimated at from twelve to fifteen thousand inhabitants. This estimate may, however, be considerably wide of the truth. When Juarros wrote, the population was calculated to be 863 Europeans, Spaniards and Creoles; 910 Mestizos; 4,765 Ladinos; and 1,695 Indians. Total, 8,233.

No means exist whereby its trade can be accurately estimated. With the exception of some direct trade with the city of Rivas or Nicaragua, situated on the lake forty-five miles below Granada, the entire commerce with San Juan is conducted through this city. Here are owned nearly all the boats used in the navigation of the lake and river, and here also reside the principal part of the "marineros," or men employed in managing them. There are several wholesale mercantile houses, trading directly with New York, London, Liverpool, some of the French, Spanish, and Italian ports, and Jamaica. The principal supplies of the merchants have, for a number of years, been obtained from the island last named, where their credit is said to be better than that of the traders from any of the other Spanish States. The transactions are often, if not generally, cash, or what is equivalent, remittances in bullion, indigo, or other staples of high value and little bulk. Advances are often made, however, on prospective crops, which seldom fail. Iron, copper, and China wares, silks, calicoes, cottons, etc., are the principal imports; while, as I have already said, the exports consist of indigo, bullion, hides, Brazil wood, and coffee. As it is almost impossible to limit the production of tropical staples in Nicaragua, such as indigo, coffee, cacao, cotton, rice, sugar,

and tobacco, not to mention hides, dye-woods, and medicines, the wealth and importance of Granada must go on increasing, as the country becomes developed by the introduction of enterprise and capital, both of which are rapidly taking that direction. This remark will hold true, even though the prospective canal, or the projected route of transit between the oceans, should not pass through or near it; for it is really the only eligible position for a large town on the south or western shore of the lake, and is, and must ever remain, nearer than all others to the great centres of population and production. Several American hotels and mercantile houses are already established there, and it is becoming better known than any other city in all Central America. A small steamer now plies between it and San Carlos, at the outlet of the lake. A short wharf or two alone are wanted to facilitate landing, and secure vessels from the waves of the lake, which sometimes roll in here with almost the force and majesty of those of the ocean.

The lake of Nicaragua, called by the aborigines *Cocibolca*, which gives to Granada its importance, and which is the most remarkable natural feature of the country, has already been described, in general terms, in the second chapter of this book. It, of course, attracted the first attention of the Spanish adventurers, who made many wonderful reports of it, which, reaching Spain, excited much speculation as to the probability of a water communication between the two oceans. Indeed it was confidently announced by some that straits opened from it to the South and to the North Seas; but it was not until 1529 that it was fully explored. In that year, we are informed by the historian Oviedo y Valdez, (who was in the country at the time of which he writes, but whose chronicle remained in manuscript until 1840, and has not yet, in any part, been published in English,) in that year, Pedro de Avila sent a man named Martin Estete, at the head of a party of soldiers and Indians, to make an exploration

both of Lake Nicaragua and Managua. They went into a province called Voto, which must have been to the northward of Lake Managua, but got involved with the natives, were attacked and driven back. They however saw, from the top of a mountain, a body of water, which they supposed to be a third lake. It was probably the great Gulf of Fonseca, which is nearly surrounded by land, and would, at a distance, be taken for an inland lake. Nothing of value resulted from this expedition. Subsequently, however, a private expedition was undertaken by Captain Diego Machuca, a friend of the historian Oviedo, which was more successful, and terminated in the discovery of the outlet of the lakes, down which the adventurers passed to the ocean. I shall let the old writer tell his own story. He says:

"Last year, (1540,) I met in the city of Santo Domingo the pilot Pedro Cora, who was one of those who had accompanied Estete in his trip to Voto, and had seen both the country and the dubious lake. He told me that he had come from New Castile, under the government of Francisco Pizarro, and that he had met at the port of Nombre de Dios some old friends whom he had known in the province of Nicaragua, and who had built a felouque and brigantine on the shores of the great lake of Nicaragua, called *Cocibolca* in the language of the country. With them was a man named Diego Machuca, with whom I have been well acquainted, and who had been commandant of the country of the Cazique Tenderi, and of the country around the lake of Masaya. After having spent some thousands of dollars in building and arming these vessels at their own expense, they embarked with the intention of exploring these lakes thoroughly, or of perishing in the attempt. Captain Diego Machuca advanced by land, at the head of two hundred men, taking the same course with the boats, which were accompanied by some canoes. They, in course of time, arrived at the spot where the waters of these lakes appeared to flow into the North Sea. As they knew not where they were, they followed the sea coast in an eastern direction, and finally arrived at the port of Nombre de Dios, where this pilot met them. He conversed, ate, and drank often with those who had thus passed out of these lakes into the sea. He also told me that Doctor Robles held these men as prisoners, because he himself wished to found a colony at the outlet of these lakes, and thus profit

by the labor of another, as is the custom with these men of letters, for the use that they make of their wisdom is rather to rob than to render justice; and this was true of this man more than of others, for he was not only a *licenciado*, or *bachelor*, but a *doctor*, the highest grade of science, and has therefore shown himself the greatest tyrant! For this reason, his employment has been taken away from him. Besides, if he had undertaken to found a colony at this outlet, he would have met there Captain Machuca, who would not have consented to have thus lost his time, money, and trouble; the old soldier would have proved himself too sharp for the wise lawyer. I asked the pilot, at what point on the coast these lakes emptied into the ocean, but he replied that he was not at liberty to tell. I believe that he wished to conceal it from me himself, and that it was on this business he was going to Spain, on behalf of those who made the discovery. I believe this place to be about one hundred leagues west of Nombre de Dios,[1] and if I obtain any new information on this matter, I will put it in the concluding chapters of this book.

"I do not regard what are called the two lakes of Nicaragua as separate lakes, because they connect the one with the other. They are separated from the South Sea by a very narrow strip of land; and I should say that the distance from their upper extremity to the outlet in the North Sea, is two hundred and fifty leagues.[2] The measures given by Pedro Arias and others are not true, since they did not know their extent. They have made a separate lake on the side where is Leon de Nagrando, on the lands of a cazique named Tipitapa, which communicates with a narrow channel with that of Granada (Nicaragua.) In summer there is but little water in this channel, so little that a man may traverse it; the water coming up no higher than his breast. This lake is filled with excellent fish. But what proves that they are both one lake is the fact that they equally abound in sea-fish and turtles. Another proof is that in 1529, there was found in the province of Nicaragua, upon the bank of this lake, a fish never seen except in the sea, and called the sword-fish, (*pexe bigue-la,*) on account of a bone armed on both sides with sharp points, placed in the extremity of its jaw. I have seen some of these fish of so great size, that two oxen attached to a cart could hardly draw them. A description of these may be found in Cap. iii. lib. 13, Part first of this work. The one found on the shores of this lake was small, being only about twelve

[1] This estimate was very accurate; the actual distance is but about two hundred and fifty miles in a right line.

[2] Oviedo overshoots the mark here; read miles for leagues, and the distance is very near the truth.

feet in length, and must have entered at the outlet of the lake. Its sword only of a hand's breadth, and of the width of two fingers.

"The water of the lakes is very good and healthful, and a large number of small rivers and brooks empty into them. In some places the great lake is fifteen or twenty fathoms deep: in other places it is scarcely a foot in depth; so that it is not navigable in all parts, but only in the middle, and with barks constructed expressly for the purpose.

"It has a large number of islands, of some extent, covered with flocks and precious woods. The largest is eight leagues in circumference, and is inhabited by Indians. It is very fertile, filled with deer and rabbits, and named *Ometepec*, which signifies *two mountains*. It formerly contained a population much more numerous than now, divided into eight or ten villages. The mountain on this island towards the east is lowest; the other is so high that its summit is seldom seen. When I passed by this island the atmosphere was very clear, and I could easily see the summit. I passed the night at a farm belonging to a gentleman named Diego Mora, situated on the main land near the island. The keeper told me that during the two years he had been in that place he had seen the summit but once, because it was always covered with clouds.

"On the south side of the great lake is a smaller one, called *Songozana*, which is separated from it by a flat shore, but one hundred and fifty paces wide. It is formed by rains, which fill it up in the rainy season; and as it is higher than the great lake, its waters bear away the sand, and empty into it. This laguna then becomes filled with alligators and all kinds of fish. But during the summer it nearly dries up. The Indians then kill with clubs great numbers of alligators and fish. It is about a league and a half in length, and three-fourths of a league in breadth. I visited it in the latter part of July, 1529, and there was but little water in it. The farmer whom I have mentioned had many hogs, which fed on the fish which they caught here, and were so large that they looked frightful, the more so, because they had the smell and taste of fish. For this reason they are now kept away from the laguna, and only allowed to approach to drink.

"In this vicinity there are numerous black tigers, which made great havoc in this farmer's flocks. He had some excellent dogs, which had killed many of these tigers; he showed me one in particular, that had killed two or three. The skin of one of these animals, which he showed me, was black, like velvet. This kind is more ferocious than the spotted variety. He said he would not take a thousand dollars for his dogs, for his pork was worth a thousand, and without the dogs the tigers would have destroyed them all."

A laguna, something like that of *Somgozana*, described by Oviedo, occurs about six miles above the city of Granada, near the place called "Los Cocos," but I am not aware that it is ever dry. The statement that sword-fish have reached the lake seems somewhat apochryphal, although it should be observed that Oviedo is usually very accurate in matters of this kind. It is, however, a fact that sharks abound in the lake. They are called "tigrones" from their rapacity. Instances are known of their having attacked and killed bathers within a stone's throw of the beach at Granada; and I have myself repeatedly seen them from the walls of the old castle, dashing about, with their fins projecting above the water. Great varieties of fish are found in Lakes Nicaragua and Managua, which are extensively caught and used by the people residing on their shores. The lake of Nicaragua was supposed, at one time, to have tides like the ocean, and the fact that it has an ebb and flow led to the early belief that it was only an estuary, or bay of the sea. The phenomenon is, however, of easy explanation. As I have said, the prevailing wind in Nicaragua is the north-east trade, which here sweeps entirely across the continent. This is strongest in the noon and evening, when it drives the water upon the western shores of the lakes: it subsides towards morning, when the equilibrium is restored, and an ebb follows. The regularity with which the winds blow, give a corresponding regularity to the ebb and flow of the lake. Sometimes, when the wind blows continuously, and with greater force than usual, from the direction I have named, the low lands on the opposite shore of the lakes are flooded to a great extent. Such occurrences, however are rare.

CHAPTER VII.

NARRATIVE CONTINUED—ARRIVAL OF THE GENERAL IN CHIEF—THE ARMY—FIREWORKS BY DAYLIGHT—PRISONERS—INTERVIEW WITH GEN. MUNOZ—ARRIVAL OF THE CALIFORNIAN ESCORT—"PIEDRAS ANTIGUAS"—THE STONE OF THE BIG MOUTH—"EL CHIFLADOR"—OTHER ANTIQUITIES—PREPARATIONS FOR DEPARTURE—CARTS AND "CARRETEROS"—VEXATIOUS DELAYS—DEPARTURE—HOW I GOT A GOOD HORSE FOR A BAD MULE, ON THE ROAD—DISTANT VIEW OF THE LAKES—THE FREEDOM OF THE FOREST—ARRIVAL AT MASAYA—GRAND ENTREE—DESERTED PLAZA—A MILITARY EXECUTION—A "POSADA"—"HIJOS DE WASHINGTON"—DISAPPOINTED MUNICIPALITY—WE ESCAPE AN OVATION—ROAD TO NINDIRI—APOSTROPHE TO NINDIRI!—OVERTAKE THE CARTS—"ALGO FRESCO"—APPROACH THE VOLCANO OF MASAYA—THE "MAL PAIS"—LAVA FIELDS—VIEW OF THE VOLCANO—ITS ERUPTIONS—"EL INFIERNO DE MASAYA," THE HELL OF MASAYA—OVIEDO'S ACCOUNT OF HIS VISIT TO IT IN 1529—ACTIVITY AT THAT PERIOD—THE ASCENT—THE CRATER—SUPERSTITIONS OF THE INDIANS—THE OLD WOMAN OF THE MOUNTAIN—THE DESCENT OF THE FRAY BLAS CASTILLO INTO THE CRATER.

SUNDAY, the day after the events recited in a previous chapter, was ushered in by a general ringing of the church bells, and a miscellaneous firing of bombas, on the part of the boys. High mass was said in "La Parroquia," for the safe arrival of the General and his army. I now discovered the efficacy of the "banda." Red and yellow cloth was suspended in front of all the balconies; gay curtains shaded every window; festoons of flowers hung above every door, and little flags and boughs of trees were strung in all convenient places. The decorations in the plaza were particularly profuse and fanciful. Altogether the streets looked much like those of some of our own cities, tricked out on the occasion of a political festival, or some similar occasion, when

impunity is conceded to absurdity of every kind. Men, women, and children were all dressed in their best attire, and seemed to be in high spirits. There was a general reaction from the despondency which had so long afflicted the popular mind; and, as I strolled through the Jalteva, I observed that already many of the fugitive inhabitants had returned, and that the municipality began to have some semblance of life again. At about eleven o'clock messengers arrived, announcing that the General was at a "hatto," a league from the city, waiting for the coming up of the main body of his troops. Directly I heard the roll of drums in the plaza, and shortly after saw a large cavalcade, embracing the municipal and departmental officers, and a body of several hundred of the leading inhabitants, defile past to meet and welcome the General. When they had departed, there was a lull in the city; the quiet of expectation had succeeded the bustle of preparation; and, there being nothing more to see, I went back to my quarters, and lying down in my hammock, suspended beneath the corridor of the house, where the fresh breeze circulated freely, rustling the orange leaves, took up Layard's Nineveh, which had been published a day or two before I left the States. I read of winged bulls, priestly processions, and Arab bands, and in a state of half-consciousness was trying hard to make out something about the Yezidis, who would, nevertheless mix themselves up with the marineros of the lake, and the Naides of San Miguelcto, when the discharge of a cannon, and the simultaneous clang of every bell in the city, startled me to my feet, and announced the approach of the long-expected, and long-wished-for General.

I took my place in the outer corridor, to see whatever there might be to see. The streets were lined with people, mostly women, their heads protected by gaudy rebosos; while every door, window, and balcony was occupied by the better portion of the population, dressed to the limit of their finery.

The discharge of cannon continued at regular intervals, becoming more and more distinct as the guns approached, while the bells kept up an incessant and almost deafening clangor. The General, I thought, was slow in his movements, and a long time in coming; for it was full an hour before the head of the procession appeared, turning sharp around a corner near my quarters. A mass of horsemen, filling the entire street, passed along in utter confusion; but these, I soon saw, were the citizens who had gone out to act as an escort. Following these was a small detachment of lancers, who moved in entire order, and made a good appearance. After them came a party of officers, brilliantly dressed, preceded by the flag of the republic, around which the people pressed in a dense body, shouting "Viva el esclarecido General!" "Viva el Gobierno Supremo!" "Viva la Republica!" "Muerte à los enemigos del orden!" Death to the enemies of order! I had no difficulty in distinguishing amongst the fine body of men composing his staff, the erect and commanding figure of Gen. Muñoz himself. He was splendidly mounted, and wore a neat undress uniform of blue, turned up with red, and a Panama hat, covered with black oiled silk. He bowed in an easy and graceful manner, in acknowledgment of the "vivas" directed to him, and of the salutations of the señoras and señoritas in the balconies. I observed his face closely when he approached; it was animated but firm,—expressive of his true character, which is that of a humane, chivalrous, high-minded, and brave man. I then thought, and still think him the finest looking officer I ever saw.

Behind the General and his staff, was another detachment of lancers, followed by a band of music; then came the soldiers in divisions. First were the "veteranos," or soldiers of the line, in a uniform of white pantaloons and jacket, a little black cap with a red ball perched in front, a species of network knapsack, a blanket thrown, toga-like, over one

shoulder, and a musket resting on the other. This is their whole equipment; they require no tents, baggage, or provision wagons. If it rains, they throw their blankets over their shoulders and the locks of their muskets, turn their pantaloons up to their thighs, and march on. At night they roll themselves in their blankets, and lie down anywhere. A plantain and a bit of cheese, or tortilla, or a cup of *tiste*, constitute their simple rations, and on such fare they will march forty and fifty miles a day, through a country where an equal European or American force would not average ten. This body of "veteranos," marched with great precision and in good order, and was followed by the new recruits, who were rather a hard looking set, dressed in every variety of costume, and not particular about keeping in line or marking step. Some wore only pantaloons and hat, the latter not always of the most classical model; some had long legs to their breeches, some short, and some none at all; but they all seemed to be in good spirits, and ready for almost anything which might turn up. They bowed frequently, beckoned, and sometimes spoke to acquaintances amongst the spectators,—improprieties of which the "veteranos" were never guilty. In fact, the latter, who were almost entirely Indians, seemed as impassible as men of bronze. Amongst the officers in the General's staff I observed a full-blooded negro; but his features were as regular as those of any European. He afterwards distinguished himself by his bravery and fidelity, and was promoted in consequence.

Upon the entrance of the procession into the plaza, although it was broad daylight, a series of fireworks and rockets were let off, which produced a great noise and smoke, but none of those brilliant results for which they are got up amongst us, and of which the people here seem to have no idea. The primary object appeared to be to make a great noise, and in this they were perfectly successful.

That afternoon, a division of troops, which had been sent

out the previous day, to break up a party of insurgents, who had concentrated at the Indian pueblo of Diriomo, came in, having effected their object, and bringing a number of prisoners. Among them was one of Somoza's lieutenants, who was pinioned, and marched in at the point of the bayonet. A litter followed, bearing a wounded soldier, half of whose face had been shot away in the encounter, presenting a shocking spectacle.

Before night, it became evident that a decided hand had now the control of affairs; men were despatched to bring down the boats sent for safety to "Los Cocos;" scouts detached to gather information; a new regiment of enrolled men ordered to report themselves under arms next morning; and a proclamation issued, guarantying the safety of all those arrayed against the government who should come in and surrender their arms. The patrols were doubled, and that night we were treated to an extra number of "alertas," from watchful sentinels. In the evening a council was held, to which all the leading citizens, whatever their previous differences, were invited, and where the General himself set the example of patriotic forbearance and fraternization, by proffering his hand to men from whom he had been estranged for years. The result was auspicious, and the council resolved upon the most prompt and decided action.

Next morning, before sunrise, as I rode to take my daily bath in the lake, I saw the General in the Plaza, wrapped in his military cloak, drilling his troops in person. At eleven o'clock he paid me a formal visit, accompanied by his staff. My previous favorable impressions were more than confirmed by the interview. He spoke of the troubles in the country with the regret of a patriot, but the determination of a general, and sketched their origin, and the popular demoralization, boldly and impartially. Upon general topics he was familiar, and conversed with force and freedom. He had once been in New Orleans, where he had seen Mr. Clay,

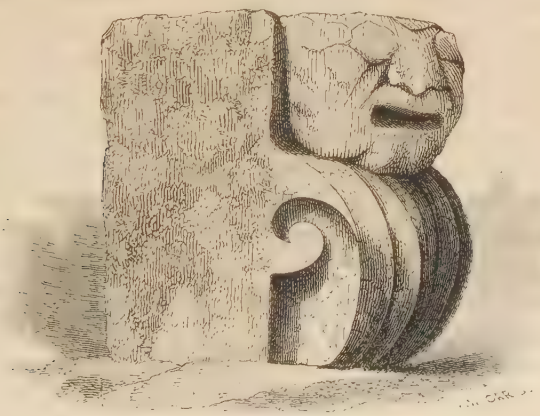
who appeared to have left a characteristic impression on his mind. I found him perfectly well acquainted with the origin and progress of the Mexican war, and with the relative parts sustained in it by the American officers. Upon the subject of British aggressions, he spoke with great bitterness, and in a manner which showed how deep and ineffaceable were the feelings of hatred which they had engendered. These aggressions, he said, made at a time when the country had begun to recover from its distractions, and when its more patriotic and intelligent citizens, before expatriating themselves in despair, were making a last effort in its behalf, and for the restoration of quiet and good government, were crimes against humanity not less than against the State. Just as the government had succeeded in reforming the army and restoring public confidence, when all its resources were wanted to carry out its new and enlightened policy, it found itself involved in a foreign controversy, shorn, on the shallowest pretexts, of half its territories, its revenues cut off, and all its energies crippled by a nation professing to be the most enlightened and philanthropic in the world! He had often felt dispirited, but had struggled on in the vague hope that the condition of the country might attract the sympathy and secure the good offices of other nations in its behalf,—as he now believed it had done those of the United States. The present disturbances, he added, had been directly charged upon the English, but however that might be, that people was directly responsible for its consequences; for the insurgents would never have dared to commit overt acts, whatever their disposition, had they not thought that the controversy with England had weakened the hands of the government, and rendered it almost powerless; and that in attacking it, they would receive some kind of countenance and support from British agents, if not from the British Government.

I am thus particular in giving the exact tenor of this conversation, as it was afterwards grossly misrepresented, and

made the subject of not over-polite, but very characteristic official correspondence, on the part of the British agents.

In the afternoon of this day, the first division of our Californian escort, in a uniform of red shirts, and armed like brigands, made their appearance. They reported that the remainder had stopped for the night at the town of Masaya, in order to visit the extraordinary lake at that place, and would come on in the morning. The march of the General had cleared the roads, and as our arrival at the capital was anxiously expected, I determined to leave Granada at the earliest possible moment, and made my arrangements accordingly.

In the evening I visited a singular relic of antiquity, called the "piedra de la boca," the *stone of the mouth.* It is planted



"PIEDRA DE LA BOCA."

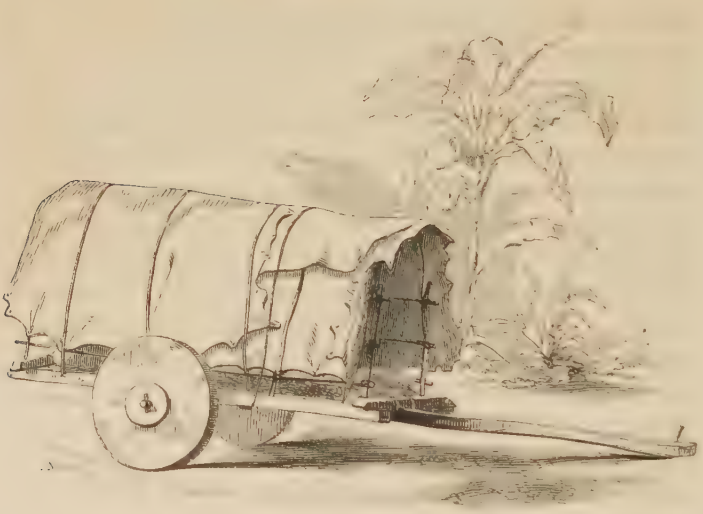
on the corner of one of the streets leading to the Jalteva, and consists of a large and singularly carved stone, which had been brought here by a curious "marinero," from an island in the lake. The accompanying engraving will convey a better idea of it than any description, and will explain why it bears its present name. It now projects about three feet above the

ground, and is two feet broad by one and a half in thickness. I had made diligent inquiry for "*piedras antiguas*," ancient stones, but got very little information concerning any,—no information, in fact, except from an old priest and some boatmen, who represented that many were to be found on the island of Ometepec, and on the large uninhabited island of Zapatero. I had, however, no time to visit them now, but made a note of them for a future occasion. At the "esquina," or corner of the old Convent of San Francisco, was another "piedra antigua," called "*El Chiflador*," the whistler. It had been much broken, and the head and upper part of the body were entirely destroyed. The fragments which remained showed that it had been well and elaborately carved. Tradition says that, when it was perfect, its mouth was open, into which the blowing of the wind made a mournful, whistling noise, exciting suspicions that it was the incarnation of one of the ancient "demonios" of the Indians. The pious padres demolished it in consequence; but probably less on that account than because they often found offerings before it, which the superstitious Indians had deposited during the night time. Another figure stood, and probably still remains at the south-eastern corner of the great Plaza, carved in black basalt. It represents a human figure, with jaws widely distended, and protruding tongue. Upon the head is crouched the representation of some kind of wild animal, of the cat kind. It is comparatively small, but well carved, and bold and striking in its outlines. This, and "el chiflador" were brought from the island of Zapatero.

During the day, the remainder of the American division arrived at Granada. Including my own party, we mustered twenty-five strong, each man withal a walking arsenal. Two days were devoted to rest and visiting, and the morning of the third of July fixed for our departure. The evening previous, our baggage was packed in carts, and sent ahead, under the escort of a detachment of lancers.

In the inhabited parts of Nicaragua, where the country is entirely level, or but slightly undulating, carts are almost universally used for the transportation of goods and the natural products of the country. They are exceedingly rude contrivances, but seemed to meet every requisition. The body consists of a stout frame-work of wood, and the wheels, as I have already said, are solid sections, cut from some large tree of hard wood, usually the mahogany. These are not sawed, but chopped into shape, and with an eye rather to use than to symmetry or beauty. The oxen, which are compact, active, and hardy animals, are not fastened in a yoke, as with us, but to a bar passing across their foreheads, and firmly lashed to their horns. Two pairs are the usual complement of a cart, but sometimes three pairs are used. When the "carreteros" have far to go with heavy loads, an extra yoke or two is either led or driven along, to be used in case of accident, and to relieve the others when tired. Two men are attached to each *carreta*; one armed with his *machete*, or a gun, goes ahead, to clear away obstacles, and to indicate the path, for the oxen are trained to follow him; while another either walks behind or rides in the cart, and has a long pole pointed with an iron spike, with which he "touches up" the animals if they are inclined to loiter or be lazy. This kind of admonition is accompanied by shouts to them collectively or individually, for each one has a name, and with epithets more forcible than elegant. So the approach of a cart is often known while it is half a mile or more distant; not solely by the shouts and maledictions of the "carreteros," but by the awful squeaking and shrieking of the wheels, which never fail to set the strongest nerves in a quiver. The roads in Nicaragua are lined with fragments of broken carts, here a wheel split in pieces, and there an axle broken in two. The axles are the first to fail, and therefore every cart carries two or three extra axles, in reserve for emergencies. If, however, the carretero should be unpro-

vided, he selects the first hard wood tree of the proper size which he can find. makes a new axle, and in half an hour is on his way again. The loads which are carried in these rude vehicles are almost incredible. Twenty-five hundred pounds is the standard freight, and is carried from twenty-five to



HIDE-COVERED CART IN NICARAGUA.

forty miles a day, depending somewhat upon the season. The morning, from three and four o'clock until eight or ten, and again in the evening from four until nine, are the usual hours for moving, for then the air is comparatively fresh and cool. Each cart carries a certain amount of "sacate" and corn for its animals, and their masters bivouac by the road-side wherever night overtakes them. The oxen are fastened to trees, the men light a fire and cook their coffee, and afterwards wrap up their heads in handkerchiefs, and if it is the dry season, swing their hammocks between two trees and go to sleep. It usually happens that two or more carts go in company, for mutual aid in case of accident, and then their

encampments, upon which the traveller often comes suddenly at night, are highly picturesque. On such occasions, some swing carelessly in hammocks, others recline on the ground, and others busy themselves around the fire, while all smoke with unbroken energy. Half the night is sometimes spent in card playing, by fire light; and bursts of laughter and snatches of song startle the sleepy traveller jogging through the forests, and are answered by the growls of the wild beasts or the howls of the "mono colorado." They are stalwart, jolly fellows, these "carreteros," and like the "arrieros," or muleteers of Mexico, invincibly honest. Merchants never hesitate in entrusting the most valuable goods to their care, and I believe no instance is known of their proving faithless to the trust reposed in them. On the contrary, the poor fellows, when attacked by robbers, as they sometimes are, will fight to the death in defence of their carts. Like the "marineros" on the lake, they constitute an almost distinct class of citizens, and in the city of Leon live in a certain "barrio," or ward, that of San Juan. Some of them have a large number of oxen and carts, which they sub-let to the poorer members of the fraternity of "carreteros," among whom exists an *esprit de corps* which will permit no underbidding or other irregular practices.

The morning of our departure came, and agreeably to instructions, Ben roused us at early dawn. We were individually ready to move at sunrise; for, although we only proposed to go to the city of Managua, a distance of fifty miles, the first day, we wished to take the journey leisurely, as became travellers in a new and strange country. Don Frederico, as our old friend, Monsieur Sigaud, at San Juan, had done before, smiled incredulously when we talked of an early departure; but, as the horses and mules were positively engaged to be at our door at sun-rise, and as the man who let them was a person of mark, and an old Spaniard to boot, we felt a good deal of faith in our plans. The sun rose, and

after walking up and down the corridor, in heavy boots, with clanking spurs, for half an hour, with a growing conviction that we were somewhat verdant, we were called to breakfast. Don Frederico looked provokingly good-natured, and when Ben, who had been despatched to stir up the laggard "*emprestador*," returned, with the news that the men had only just gone to hunt up the animals in the fields, he laughed outright, and so did we, notwithstanding our vexation. We shortly found that our escort was no better off: their horses had not yet come in. So we all went to the plaza, and sat until past nine o'clock, witnessing the drilling of the new recruits. All things must have an end, and so did our suspense. The horses finally came; and, after a world of tryings on and takings off, pulling here and padding there, the beasts were saddled, and we marched to the plaza, where, according to previous understanding, we were met by the General and his staff, and a crowd of citizens on horseback, who had gathered to escort us "with all the honors" out of the city. My young medical friend from New Haven had won the privilege of carrying the flag at the head of the cavalcade, and after him, under the marshalling of a stalwart Buckeye, who had served amongst the dragoons in the Mexican war, the "Californian division" was arranged in column with military precision. The troops were all drawn up, and presented arms as we defiled by, under a discharge from the cannon in front of the "Cuartel General." The people lined the streets, and shouted as earnestly for "los Estados Unidos del Norte," and its representative, as they did for the "esclarecido General," upon his arrival a few days before.

I could not help thinking of the figure which our singular cavalcade must have cut in the eyes of an uninterested spectator, nor resist smiling at my own part in the affair. It, however, was a bona fide ceremonial, and so received and valued. As we approached the arsenal, we found its garrison on the *qui vive;* a little wreath of smoke shot up, and boom went the

cannon there. Altogether this was more imposing than our departure from San Carlos, and not a whit less entertaining.

I was mounted on a large white mule, which the *empresta-dor* had specially recommended to me as "muy manso y comodo" very gentle and easy; but which I soon found was an old broken-winded beast, and a villanously hard traveller. The General observed that I had been taken in, and glancing round, fixed his eyes on the dashing horse of a young fellow, deputed by the government to accompany us on our march as commissary and provider. Directly he stopped short, and ordered him to dismount and change animals with me. The order was promptly obeyed,—for there was no parleying with the General; and although I thought the proceeding rather summary, I was too glad to get rid of the mule to offer the slightest objection to the arrangement. Besides, the deposed horseman should have provided us with better animals—of course he should!

Our escort accompanied us about two miles, to a point where the short cut, or mule path, to Masaya diverged from the *camino real;* and here, after a profusion of bows, an interminable shaking of hands, and "buenas viajes," and "Dios guardes," in every tone and emphasis, we separated from the crowd, and went on our way alone. The path was narrow, and led through bush and brier, under gigantic trees, draped all over with vines, down into dark ravines, where the sun's rays never reached, over ridges covered with grass, with here and there clusters of luxuriant trees, gemmed all over with fragrant flowers, where we could catch views of the glittering lake, with its distant shores, and several islands. Thus we went, in Indian file, the red shirts and gleaming arms of the men giving life and relief to the scene, and making the noisy parrots, which fluttered beside the path, still more noisy; while brightly colored birds glanced in and out of the thick green coverts, or a startled deer bounded hurriedly before us! Altogether, the novelty, excitement,

and beauty filled me with that wild delight which only the Arab feels, or the free Indian on his prairie ocean, and one hour's enjoyment of which were "worth ten years of quiet life!" My chest expands, and every nerve becomes tense, even now, while I write, at the recollection of that glorious morning, and that march to Masaya. Occasionally we came upon a cane house, nestled in some quiet glen, or upon some beautiful slope, surrounded by palms and plantains, and fields of tobacco and maize, in the doors of which stood women and knots of frightened children, who gazed wonderingly upon our strange party. They all seemed reassured when we cried out "adios amigas!" and responded with "Dios guarde à Ustedes, caballeros!" "God preserve you, Sirs!" At about six miles from Granada, we reached the highest point of ground between that city and Masaya; one of those ridges of land which seem to radiate like the legs of a lobster from the great volcano of Mombacho, and which are, for the most part, destitute of trees. From this point we obtained our finest view of Lake Nicaragua, the river, or estuary of Tipitapa connecting it with Lake Managua, and of that lake itself, hemmed in, upon the east, by the high irregular mountains of Matagalpa and New Segovia. Between us and the lakes was a magnificent slope, leagues on leagues in extent, a sea of dense tree-tops, unrelieved, so far as the eye could discover, by a single acre of cleared or cultivated ground. Yet there were many haciendas and estates, the positions of which were indicated by wreaths of smoke rising in thin curls here and there above the trees. We dismounted, and sat for half an hour beneath a spreading tree, to enjoy the prospect, and pay our respects to the canteens of water, (diluted with *ardiente*,) with which each man was supplied.

The path by which we journeyed had been used, from time immemorial, for mules and horses, and in many places, particularly on the declivities of the swells of land, where water had contributed its aid, it was worn deep in the soft rock

and compacted earth, and so narrow as utterly to preclude all turning around after it had once been entered. Upon approaching such places, if their whole extent cannot be discovered, it is usual to halloo loudly, in order to ascertain if any one is approaching; for if horsemen meet in these places, one or the other must back out,—a process sufficiently difficult.

At about one o'clock the more frequent occurrence of cultivated grounds, of little "hattos" and cane cabins, showed that we were approaching the large Indian pueblo of Masaya. The path became broader, and showed constant use; and numerous little paths diverged in every direction. Where they joined the main road, crosses were in some cases erected, on which hung wreaths of faded flowers, perishing tokens of pious zeal. We now met and overtook numbers of Indians, singly and in groups, carrying netted sacks, filled with ears of maize, with vegetables, or meats: some had braided mats, hats of woven palm leaves, hammocks, and other articles for sale or use. They all silently gave us the road on our approach. They seldom spoke unless first addressed; but then always replied politely, sometimes adding, interrogatively, "California?" They were small, but well-formed, with features much more regular than our Indians, and of singularly mild, and expressive features, and docile manners.

The entrance to Masaya was by a long and broad street, lined on both sides by a forest of fruit-trees, beneath which were clustered the thatched cane houses of the inhabitants. We had previously waited until the rear of our party had come up, and now spurred through the streets in a solid column. As we went on, the houses became more numerous, and occasionally one of adobes, with a tiled roof, appeared amongst the frailer structures which I have described. After going nearly half a mile, we turned short to the right, and riding for a number of blocks in streets precisely resembling those of Granada, passing an abandoned convent or two, we gal-

loped into the principal plaza. In the centre of this stood the great church, a long, heavy building, with a very fair façade and tower, and much exceeding in size any of the churches of Granada. On the sides of the plaza were several rows of fine shops, with their doors and shutters covered with tin; for more foreign goods are retailed in Masaya than in any other town in the State. Its people are regarded as the most industrious, and are celebrated throughout all Central America for the extent and variety of their manufactures. Cordage, hammocks, saddles, cotton cloth "petates" or mats, hats, shoes, in short, all the articles of common use in the country, are produced here, besides large quantities of *dulces* (sweetmeats and jellies,) which were, at one time, extensively exported to Peru and South America. But the shops, in consequence of the existing troubles, were shut, and the plaza was almost entirely deserted. Near the dead wall of the church a rude chair was standing; it was the fatal "*banquete*," upon which, a few days before, one of the leading "facciosos" of the city, after having been tried and condemned by a court-martial, had been shot. Near by the sod was turned up, marking the spot where the body of the executed man was buried. He had been tried at one o'clock, condemned at two, shot at three, and buried at four. Short shrift, indeed; but such is the summary process of martial law in Nicaragua, when, as in this instance, the guilt of the criminal admits neither of doubt nor extenuation. Some of our party had witnessed the execution, which they described as very impressive. It was done in sight of the entire army, from which a corporal's guard was detached for the service. The prisoner was first taken within the church, where he confessed and received the sacrament. He was conducted to his seat by two priests, a little cross put in his hands, and a blessing invoked on his soul. Guns, in half of which only were balls, were placed in the hands of the guard, who fired at the distance of ten paces. The man fell dead at the first

discharge. The example was deemed necessary, and it no doubt was so in this instance. It should, however, be observed, that no officer has established a higher character for humanity than General Muñoz, who has never stained his reputation by any of those butcheries and wanton cruelties which have been the rule, rather than the exception, in the civil wars of Spanish America.

We rode to a *posada* kept by an exceedingly fat and cheerful lady, who was so happy that her "pobre casa" should be honored by the "hijos de Washington," the sons of Washington! In a few minutes, several of the alcaldes of the town came in, out of breath, and in great tribulation because they had not been apprised of our approach. They proposed even now to ring all the bells, and were urgent that we should stop the rest of the day, so as to give them an opportunity of making a demonstration commensurate to the importance of the occasion. But we pleaded haste, and promised to return soon, and thus escaped being lionized in Masaya. We had proposed to stop here several hours, and visit the remarkable volcanic lake, from which the town is supplied with water, but the delay of the morning compelled us to cut short our stay, if we would reach Managua, twelve leagues distant, that night. So we only allowed the horses to breathe awhile, and then mounted again and resumed our march. We went quite two miles from the plaza before we got fairly out of the city, which has some fifteen or eighteen thousand inhabitants, and covers full a square league.

Beyond Masaya is a broad and beautiful avenue, lined on either hand by luxuriant fields: in this respect far surpassing the country around Granada. This avenue leads to the pueblo of Nindiri, and people mounted or on foot passing to and fro, gave it an appearance of animation beyond what we had hitherto seen out of the towns. About midway between Masaya and Nindiri, the road passes over a bubble-shaped hill, raised by volcanic forces from below, the uplifted strata

curving with all the regularity of the rainbow. Although it would have been easy to have passed around it, yet as the Indians before the conquest had probably gone directly over, the same path has been continued, for no better reason, ever since. It however had been much improved, and a deep notch had been cut or worn in the soft sand rock, to the depth of forty or fifty feet, resembling very much the deep cuts on the lines of some of our railroads. Upon one side, in a little nitch, stood a small cross, covered with wilted flowers. Beyond this defile, the road resumed its broad and level course, and we rode rapidly over its gravelled bed into the town of Nindiri.

Nindiri! How shall I describe thee, beautiful Nindiri, nestling beneath thy fragrant, evergreen roof of tropical trees, entwining their branches above thy smooth avenues, and weaving green domes over the simple dwellings of thy peaceful inhabitants! Thy musical name, given thee long ages ago, perhaps when Rome was young, has lost nothing of its melody; *Neeuda*, water, and *Diria*, mountain, it still tells us, in an ancient and almost forgotten tongue, that thou slumberest now, as of yore, between the lake and the mountain! Amongst all the fairy scenes of quiet beauty which the eye of the traveller hath lingered upon, or the fancy has limned with her rosy-hued pencil, none can compare with thee, beautiful Nindiri, chosen alike of the mountain Fairies and forest Dryads, of the Sylphs of the lake, and the Naiads of the fountain! Nindiri!

This little Indian village far surpassed, in point of picturesque beauty, anything we had yet seen. Oranges, plantains, marañons, jocotes, nisperos, mamays, and tall palms, with their variously-colored fruits blushing brown or golden among the leaves, and here and there a low calabash tree, with its green globes strung on every limb, all clustering together, literally embowered the cane huts of the simple-minded and industrious inhabitants. Indian women, naked

to the waist, sat beneath the trees spinning snow-white cotton or the fibre of the *pita*, (*agave*,) while their noisy, naked little ones tumbled joyously about on the smoothly-beaten ground, where the sunlight fell in flickering, shifting mazes, as the wind bent the branches of the trees with its unseen fingers. Quiet primitive Nindiri! seat of the ancient caziques and their barbaric courts,—even now, amidst the din of the crowded city, and the crush and conflict of struggling thousands, amidst grasping avarice and importunate penury, bold-fronted hypocrisy and heartless fashion, where virtue is modest and vice is brazen, where fire and water, and the very lightnings of heaven, are the slaves of human will, how turns the memory to thee, as to some sweet vision of the night, some dreamy Arcadia, fancy-born, and half unreal!

We rode through the arched and hedge-lined streets into a broad open plaza, in the centre of which stood a quaint old church. A few sleek cows were lying in its shade, chewing their cuds in a meditative way, and hardly opening their sleepy eyes as we trotted by. Beneath some large trees upon one side of the plaza, we descried our carts and their escort, taking what at home would be called "a nooning." The lances of the men were stacked together, and their horses fastened with *lariats* to the carts, forming, with their gay trappings, a striking group, abundantly set off by the reclining figures of their riders, who had disposed themselves in attitudes expressive of the fullest abandonment to individual ease. We were not long in joining the party. The officer in command, in anticipation of our arrival, had prepared two or three jars of "algo fresco," something fresh, delightfully compounded of water, the juice of the cocoa-nut, and of the acidulous marañon,—a delicious and refreshing beverage, to which we paid our respects in protracted draughts, not forgetting "*mil gracias*," and sundry *medios* to a plump, laughing Indian girl who dispensed it, in snowy calabashes, to the thirsty strangers.

The only part of the road which was supposed to be frequented by the *ladrones* was now passed, and although the commander of the escort was very willing to proceed with the carts, I did not think it necessary, and so it was agreed that he should return. This arranged, we all mounted again, and the last we saw of our military friend was the gleaming lances of his men, and the fluttering of their little red streamers, as they galloped back through the streets of Nindiri.

Beyond the town we struck into the forest, and began to ascend one of the slopes or spurs of the volcano of Masaya. Occasional openings among the trees enabled us to catch glimpses of lake, plain, and mountain, more extended even and more beautiful than those which we had witnessed in the morning, from the heights beyond Masaya. The road passed over fields of disintegrating pumice and lava-beds ages old, and now covered with accumulated soil and a thick forest. At the distance of about a league, however, we came to what is called the "*mal pais*," literally, the *bad country*. It was an immense field of lava, which at the last eruption of Masaya had flowed down from the volcano, for a distance of fifteen or twenty miles, in the direction of the lakes. The road crossed it on the summit of a ridge running transversely to the lava current, where the field was narrow, but spreading out on both sides to a great distance. It looked like a vast plain of cast iron, newly cooled, black and forbidding. In places it was rolled up in frowning masses, elsewhere piled one flake on the other, like the ice in the spring time, upon the shores and low islands, or in the narrow channels of our rivers. An ocean of ink, suddenly congealed during a storm, if the imagination of the reader can picture it, would better illustrate its appearance than anything else which occurs to me at this moment. Here and there great, ragged masses, fifty or a hundred feet square, had been turned completely over by the current as it flowed beneath, exhibiting upon the exposed surface a regularly striated appearance,

like the curling fibre of the oak or maple. I dismounted and scrambled out amongst the *crinkling* fragments, but did not go far, as the sharp edges and points cut through my boots like knives. At one place I observed where the half-cooled lava had wrapped itself, layer on layer, around a large tree, which, subsequently burning out or decaying, had left a perfect cast of its trunk and principal branches, so accurate that the very roughness of the bark could still be traced. But what struck me with most surprise was the circumstance that the flood of lava had flowed over the narrow ridge where I was standing, and that a depression existed between me and the volcano whence the molten matter had come. It was clear enough that the popular adage and axiom about the indisposition of water to flow up hill, does not always apply to lava. The explanation of the phenomenon may perhaps be found in the fact that the surface of the lava cooling, is thrown off in fragments, building walls on either side, between which the lava current continues to flow, until rising high, and the vertical pressure becoming great, it breaks through the barrier, and discharges itself laterally. Or, the intermediate valley being filled by the melted substance with a rapidity which would not admit of its finding its level at once, it is easy to understand that it might discharge itself over the ridge; and the supply subsequently ceasing, the accumulated matter in the valley, spread out laterally and subside, in the manner here exhibited.

Not a tree intervened between me and the volcano, only the broad, black and rugged waste of lava. I could therefore distinctly see the mountain, and trace the ragged outlines of its ancient and principal crater. This latest discharge of lava, however, does not seem to have been made from this mouth, but from a lower elevation, upon the slope of the volcano. This elevation had a reddish, scoriaceous appearance, and its crater, one side of which had been broken down

by the lava, was comparatively small. In fact there were a number of orifices, or craters, at other points, which had been the vents in previous eruptions. It was evident enough that there had been hot work here in past times, although everything looked quiet enough now.

The early chroniclers have a great deal to say about this volcano, which was called "*El Infierno de Masaya*," the Hell of Masaya. Its last eruption, when the lava field which I have described was formed, occurred within the historical period, in 1670. No detailed account of it has ever been published, although there is little doubt that it was duly recorded by some of the ecclesiastics of the country, whose relations still exist amongst the archives of the Church in Spain or Italy.

Since this final eruption, the volcano has been in a dormant state. It was visited in 1840 by Mr. Stephens, who discovered no signs of activity. Yet, at the time of the Discovery, it was regarded as one of the greatest wonders of the New World. The chronicler Oviedo visited it in 1529, and has left us a very complete account of its appearance and condition at that period. He says:

"There is another mountain in this province, called Masaya, of which I can speak as an eye-witness, having visited it in person, after having heard many fables related by those who pretended to have ascended to the crater. I once went up Vesuvius, and beheld a crater of twenty-five or thirty fathoms in diameter, from which smoke rose perpetually, which smoke people say changes to a very bright flame at night. I remained there a whole night, with the Queen of Naples, whose chief of the wardrobe (guarda ropa) I was, whither I accompanied her in 1501. From thence we went to Palermo, in Sicily, near which is Mount Etna." Oviedo here makes a long enumeration of the volcanoes known at the time he wrote, and continues: "But it seems to me that none of these volcanoes are to be compared with that of Masaya, which, as I have said, I have seen and examined myself. Of this the reader shall be the judge, after he has read the description of that mountain, whose name signifies 'the burning mountain,' in the language of the Chorotegans, in whose ter-

ritory it is situated. In the language of Nicaragua it is called '*Popogatepec*,' which means 'boiling stream.'[1]

"I will now relate what I saw. I left the village of Managua, July 25, 1529, and spent the night at the house of Diego Machuca [who, we have seen, was the first explorer of Lake Nicaragua], being half a league from the foot of the mountain, on the shores of Lake Nindiri. I descended the same day to examine the lake; and the next, which was St. James' day, I started before the rising of the sun to ascend the mountain, and behold the flame, and the other extraordinary things worthy of mention. This mountain is very steep, and is surrounded by Indians of the Chorotegan nation. Tigers, lions [pumas], and many other ferocious animals abound here. Beyond this mountain stretches an uncultivated plain, which the Spaniards have named *el mal pais*. It is covered with rocks, resembling scoriæ. In this an isolated mountain rises up to the height of a league from foot to summit. The mountain may be three or four leagues in circumference at its base, and is entirely different from those in its neighborhood. I know that many Spaniards have sent descriptions of this mountain to the emperor; and that others, on their return to Spain, have given out what they have seen, whose relations I do not doubt. On the contrary, I rejoice that I am to speak of a matter so well known, and that there is no lack of witnesses who can attest the truth of my recital. Many of those who pretend to have visited this mountain have only seen it from a distance; and but few have ascended it. Some assert that the light of the flame is sufficiently strong to read by, at the distance of three leagues, which I cannot confirm.

"I left the house of Machuca in the middle of the night, as I have before mentioned, and I had nearly reached the summit at sunrise. It was not, however, light enough for me to read my prayers (breviary), which I had brought with me, when I was within a quarter of a league of the summit. Yet the night was very dark, in consequence of which the flame appeared more brilliant. I have heard persons worthy of credit say that when the night is very dark and rainy, the light from the crater is so vivid that one can see to read at the distance of half a league; this I will neither affirm nor deny, for at Granada or Salteba, when there is no moon, the whole country is illuminated by the flame of the volcano;

[1] This is a mistake of the chronicler. *Popo* or *poco* is the Mexican for smoke, and *tepec* mountain, i. e. "Smoking Mountain." *Ca* or *ga* is a word used to impersonate, embody, or individualize. It will shortly be seen that a Mexican colony existed in Nicaragua.

and it is a fact that it can be seen at the distance of sixteen or twenty leagues; for I have seen it at that distance myself. However, we cannot call that which proceeds from the crater precisely a flame, but rather a smoke as bright as a flame; it cannot be seen at that distance by day, but only at night, as I have said.

"But to return to my journey; I was accompanied by a cazique whose baptismal name was Don Francisco; in the Chorotegan language he was called Natatime; also by a negro and two faithful Indians. Although the negro was a safe man, I acknowledge that I was wrong to put myself in such company; but I made up my mind to do so from the desire I had to succeed in this enterprise. I had found Machuca sick; those who were to accompany me had broken their word, and returned to Granada; yet I was not willing to suspend my journey, so great was my desire to learn what truth there might be in the relations of those who pretended to have been there. When it was no longer possible to go on horseback, I dismounted, and put sandals of wood on my feet, for shoes would not answer for such a road. I left one of the Indians to take charge of my horse, and went forward with the cazique, who served us for a guide, and who, with the negro and the other Indian, I made to go before me. When the cazique arrived near the crater, he sat down, fifteen or twenty paces off, and pointed out to me with his finger the frightful spectacle. The summit of the mountain forms a *plateau*, covered with red, yellow, and black rocks, spotted with divers colors. Except on the eastern side, where I stood, the whole plateau is occupied by a crater, whose orifice is so large, that in my opinion a musket ball could not traverse it. There proceeds from it a continual smoke, but not so thick as to prevent one from examining it both internally and externally; for, as the east wind blows continually here, it bears the smoke away to the opposite side from the spectator. This crater is, to the best of my judgment, and of those whom I have heard speak of it, about one hundred and thirty fathoms in depth; the width continually diminishing as it descends. This mountain is not as high on its southern and eastern sides as on the others, and looks like human workmanship, so regular are its outlines; excepting, however, the side where I was, which, as I have before mentioned, is covered with rocks. There were also some caverns, but one could see little or nothing but their entrances; and the sides of the crater could scarcely be seen; for no one durst advance sufficiently near.

"At the bottom of the crater could be seen a place perfectly round, and large enough to contain a hundred cavaliers, who could play at

fencing and have more than a thousand spectators; it would hold even more than that, were it not for another crater in the middle of it, inclining a little to the south, which can be very distinctly seen. It appeared to me to be from forty to sixty fathoms in depth and fourteen or fifteen paces in circumference. It might be much more; for I viewed the opening from a very high point, and the depth from a still higher point. On the north side, the crater is three times as far from the interior wall of the volcano as on the south side.

"Happening to be at Valladolid in 1548, at the court of the prince N. S. Don Rodrigo de Contreras, who was once governor of this province, he told me that the depth of the volcano had been measured in his presence, and found to be one hundred and thirty fathoms; and from the bottom to the burning fluid, forty fathoms more; but a circumstance, mentioned to me by the commander, Fr. Francis de Bobadilla, still more astonished me, viz.: that when he ascended to the crater of Masaya, with some other persons, the holes were in the middle of the place, and the burning matter had risen to within four fathoms of the top; and yet six months had not elapsed since my journey. I am of the opinion, however, that he told the truth; for besides his being a man worthy of belief, I have heard Machuca say that he had seen the burning matter rise even with the top.

"I said that I beheld at the bottom of the second crater a fire, which was as liquid as water, and of the color of brass. This fire appeared to me more violent than any I had ever seen before, and entirely covered the bottom of the crater. From time to time this matter rose into the air with great force, hurling large masses to a height of many feet, as it appeared to me. Sometimes these masses were arrested on the sides of the crater, and remained there, before becoming extinguished, time enough to repeat the *credo* six times, and then looked like the scoriæ of a forge. I cannot believe that a Christian could behold this spectacle unmindful of hell, and unrepentant of his sins; particularly whilst comparing this vein of sulphur with the eternal grandeur of everlasting fire which awaits those who are ungrateful to God!

"Towards the middle of the first crater, a large number of parroquets might be seen, circling around, of that species having the long tails, and called *jijaves*. I could only see their backs, for I was much higher than they. They make their nests among the rocks, below the spectator. I threw some stones into the abyss, and made the negro do likewise, but could never distinguish where they fell; which proves clearly how high was the place where I stood. Some persons have asserted that when the

parroquets are fluttering among these places, and one looks fixedly, he seems not to see fire but sulphur. I am not far removed from this opinion, but leave the decision to those knowing more of the matter than myself.

"On the top of the volcano, on the eastern part, an elevation rises up, in which is an opening like to the crater, but deeper. A smoke ascends through it, which cannot be seen during the daytime, but which projects into the darkness a great light, uniting itself to that proceeding from the larger opening. This opening does not terminate in a broad bottom, but is a funnel-shaped orifice, apparently filled with coals. The cazique told me that, in the times of his ancestors, the main crater was here, but that subsequently it changed its location to the spot it now occupies. These two craters are separated from each other only by some rocks. The ground is covered with barren trees, yielding no fruit, except one alone, which produces yellow berries, about the size of a musket ball, named *nanzi;* they are good to eat, and the Indians say that they are good for bowel complaints. No birds are seen on this mountain, except crows, and the parroquets I have spoken of.

"A remarkable circumstance, told me by Machuca and Fr. Francis de Bobadilla is, that the melted matter sometimes mounts to the top of the crater, whilst I could see it only at a great depth. Having made due inquiry in regard to this, I have learnt that when much rain falls, the fire does, in fact, ascend as far as the top; for the cavity becomes filled with water, which flows in from all parts of the mountain, and remains full until it has been overcome and destroyed by the heat of the opposing element. This view of the matter is confirmed by what Olaus Magnus says of the volcanoes of Iceland, which do not consume the combustibles around them, but the water which they contain. It must be so at Masaya; for when the flame is seen at the distance of a league and a half, it does not look like flame, but burning smoke which covers the whole mountain. If it were fire, it would leave neither tree, leaf, nor verdure; on the contrary, the whole mountain is covered with trees and herbage, almost to the borders of the crater.

"I spent two hours here, gazing and drawing, till ten o'clock; it was the day of St. Anne; I then resumed my route to Granada, or Salteba, which is three leagues from Masaya. Not only in this city, but even at the distance of two leagues beyond it, the volcano gave as much light as the moon some days before she fulls.

"I have heard the cazique of Tenderi [Nindiri] say that he has often gone, in company with other caziques, to the edge of the crater; and that

an old woman, entirely naked, has come forth from it, with whom they held a *monexico*, or secret council. They consulted her in order to know if they should make war, or decline or grant a truce with their enemies. They did nothing without first consulting her; for she told them whether they were to conquer or to be conquered: she told them also, if it were about to rain; if the harvest of maize would be abundant; and, in fine, all future events. And every thing always came to pass just as she had predicted it would. On such occasions, a man or two, some women, and children of both sexes, were sacrificed to her; the victims offering themselves voluntarily. He added that since the Christians came into the country, the old woman had appeared only at long intervals; that she had told them the Christians were wicked; and that she did not wish to have any communication with the Indians until they had driven the Christians from their country. I asked him how they got below. He answered that formerly there was a road; but that the cavity had been enlarged by the caving in of the land around it, and thus the path had been destroyed. I asked him what they did after their council with the old woman, and what was her appearance. He replied that she was old and wrinkled; that her breasts hung down over her belly; that her hair was thin and erect; that her teeth were long and sharp as a dog's; her skin of a darker color than Indians ordinarily have; eyes fiery and sunken; in short, he described her as like the devil, which she must have been. If this cazique told the truth, it cannot be a matter of doubt that the Indians were in connection with him. When the council was over, the old woman entered within the crater, and never came out except to a new council. The Indians often converse about this superstition, and many others; and in their books they represent the devil with as much leanness and with as many *queues* as we are in the habit of painting him at the feet of the archangel Michael, or the apostle St. Barthelemy. I am of the opinion, therefore, that they have seen him, and that he has shown himself to them; since they place his image in their temples, where they perform their diabolical idolatries. On the side of the crater of Masaya there is a large heap of cups, plates, and basins, of excellent crockery, made in the country. Some had been broken, others were entire. The Indians had brought them there filled with all kinds of meat, and left them, saying they were for the old woman to eat, in order to please or appease her when an earthquake or violent tempest takes place; for they attribute to her all the good or evil that happens to them. As to the substance, in which, according to the cazique, this *old one* made her retreat, it appeared to me to resemble glass, or the metal of bells in

a state of fusion. The interior walls of the crater are of hard stone in some places, but brittle almost everywhere. The smoke goes from the crater on the eastern side, but it is driven towards the west by the breeze. A small quantity of smoke comes out on the northern side of the crater.

"The mountain of Masaya is six or seven leagues from the South Sea, and about twelve and a half degrees from the Equator. I have now completed all I promised to say in this fifth chapter."

Oviedo also gives us a long and entertaining account, at second hand, of the descent of the Fray Blas del Castillo into the crater of Masaya, and what befel him there This will be found translated in another place.

MACHETE-CALABOZO. MACANA.

CHAPTER VIII.

MAGNIFICENT VIEWS OF SCENERY—"RELOX DEL SOL"—JOHN JONES AND ANTIQUITIES—AN "ALARM;" REVOLVERS, AND A RESCUE—DISTANT BELLS—DON PEDRO BLANCO—MANAGUA—ANOTHER GRAND ENTREE—OUR QUARTERS—SUPPER SERVICE—ENACTING THE LION—VIRTUES OF AGUARDIENTE—AN "OBSEQUIO" OR TORCH-LIGHT PROCESSION IN HONOR OF THE UNITED STATES—A NATIONAL ANTHEM—NIGHT WITH THE FLEAS—FOURTH OF JULY AND A PATRIOTIC BREAKFAST—SAINT JONATHAN—LEAVE MANAGUA—MATEARES—PRIVILEGES OF A "COMPADRE"—LAKE OF MANAGUA—A MAGNIFICENT VIEW—THE VOLCANO OF MOMOTOMBO—A SOLITARY RIDE—GEOLOGICAL PUZZLE—NAGAROTE—THE POSADA—MULES ABANDONED—A SICK CALIFORNIAN—DINNER AT A PADRE'S—THE SANTA ANITA—VIRTUES OF A PIECE OF STAMPED PAPER—A STORM IN THE FOREST—PUEBLO NUEVO—FIVE DAUGHTERS IN SATIN SHOES—UNBROKEN SLUMBERS—ADVANCE ON LEON—AXUSCO—A FAIRY GLEN—THE GREAT PLAIN OF LEON—A "TOUCH" OF POETRY—MEET THE AMERICAN CONSUL—A PREDICAMENT—CAVALCADE OF RECEPTION—NEW ILLUSTRATION OF REPUBLICAN SIMPLICITY—EL CONVENTO—A METAMORPHOSIS—THE BISHOP OF NICARAGUA—FORREST, MISS CLIFTON, MR. CLAY—CRITICISM ON ORATORY—NINE VOLCANOES IN A ROW—DISTANT VIEW OF THE GREAT CATHEDRAL—THE CITY—IMPOSING DEMONSTRATIONS—THE GRAND PLAZA—A PANTOMIMIC SPEECH AND REPLY—THE LADIES, "GOD BLESS THEM!"—HOUSE OF THE AMERICAN CONSUL—END OF THE CEREMONIES—SELF-CONGRATULATIONS THEREON—A SERENADE—MARTIAL ASPECT OF THE CITY—TROUBLE ANTICIPATED—PRECAUTIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT.

BEYOND the "mal pais" the road passed over a beautiful undulating country, with occasional open, grassy spaces, dotted here and there with little clumps of bushes and trees, from whence the eye caught glimpses of the distant lakes and mountains. For many miles, scoria and disentegrating lava showed the extent of volcanic action in ancient times; in fact, for the whole distance to Managua, volcanic traces

and products were to be seen on every hand. Half way between Masaya and Managua we came suddenly upon a large, erect stone, which, at first glance, I supposed was one of the "piedras antiguas" of the country; a veritable monolith, like those discovered by Mr. Stephens at Copan. It however proved to be "un relox del sol," an ancient sun dial, erected by the early Spaniards for the double purpose of marking the distance and the hours. There had been an inscription upon it, but it was obliterated now, and a rude cross had been deeply graven in its place. I dismounted to examine it more closely, and found "John Jones" scratched upon one of its sides. Ubiquitous "John Jones!" He had been convicted of bigamy, and sent to the State prison but two days before I left New York! W. inquired if "Jones" was an Aztec name, and I felt cheap enough about "monuments," and was mounting again in great disgust, when we were all startled by the sudden discharge of a pistol, in a dark ravine which we had just passed, followed by a confused shout, and another discharge, and then a volley in quick succession. An attack, in the present unsettled state of the country, was by no means an impossibility; and the firing continuing, we turned our horses' heads and galloped back, weapons in hand, to the rescue. A moment brought us within view of half a dozen of our party, their horses plunging in dire confusion, while their riders fired their revolvers with the greatest rapidity into the forest. Glancing amongst the trees, we discovered the enemy, a troop perhaps thirty or forty strong, crashing amongst the bushes, in full retreat. It was a squadron of large, yellow monkeys upon which the party had fired, in frolicksome mood, with a design rather to alarm their comrades than injure the monkeys, who escaped with no further damage than a prodigious fright, sufficient to last them for the remainder of their natural lives. The cacchinatory exercises following upon such a feat over, we all moved on together. The road was deeply shaded, but broad and

smooth; and, as the sun went down, conversation gradually ceased, and the horses, invigorated by the cool atmosphere, all fell into a rapid pace, the clatter of their hoofs alone disturbing the silence of the evening.

Hark, a bell! the sound vibrating even into the depths of the leafy forest! It is the *oracion*, and we are near Managua. But it was nearly an hour before we emerged into the open fields surrounding the city, and then it was so dark that we could discern nothing except the lights of the houses, and the occasional gleaming of the lake beyond.

Here we were met by Don Pedro Blanco, to whom I was specially recommended by Don Frederico. He had come to put his "pobre casa" at my disposition. Don Pedro was for doing things in a grand way, and accordingly desired us to wait for all the stragglers to come up, so as to make an imposing entrée, which we did, at a round pace, to the great alarm of the infantile, and the utter indignation of the canine portion of the population. It was too dark to see much of the town, and I only remember interminable streets lined with huts and low houses, a big church with a spectral white archway in front, and a great plaza flanked by two or three two-story buildings, with another large church in its centre. All this was out of our way, for Pedro was determined to impress us with the magnitude of the town, and I began to think that it had no end, when suddenly Pedro turned short, ducked his head, and dashed beneath the "Porteria" into the *patio* or court yard of his own house, whilst our escort filed off, at a tearing rate, for the public posada. Fortunate escort!

Don Pedro's house was not the most aristocratic in the place, nor yet the cleanest, although his wife was amongst the fattest and fairest. It had but two rooms, and one of these was a *tienda*, or store, where our hostess dispensed candles and candy, dry goods and dulces, toys and tobacco, vegetables and medicines, in quantities to suit purchasers.

Here a couple of new hammocks were forthwith swung, into which we rolled without ceremony, and with all the satisfaction of tired men. Pedro's grand *entrée* had almost finished us; but he had considerately ordered supper before leaving home, and I almost forgave him the awful trot he had given us, when I saw the cloth spread and the savory dishes make their appearance one by one. M., who had never before ridden two consecutive miles on horseback, and who, thoroughly "used up," had lain like a log in his hammock, began now to show some signs of life, and even sat up and looked voraciously at the table. I asked for a basin of water before sitting down, which Don Pedro produced at once, but protested against our washing ourselves then, as it was "muy malo," and would bring on the *calentura*, or fever. This superstition, I afterwards found, was not only general amongst the natives, but also amongst foreigners resident in the country. I however never regarded it, and yet escaped the calentura.

Pedro's supper was well enough served, only there were neither knives nor forks. Ben supplied these from his *alforjas*, and we got on very well, or rather might have done so; but before we had fairly taken the edge off our appetites we heard a great uproar in the direction of the plaza, succeeded by the firing of guns and the whizzing discharge of bombas. I glanced round at our host, who so far from exhibiting any alarm seemed to be mightily exultant. I had made up my mind to be surprised at nothing, and so asked no questions. Meantime the tumult increased, and the squeaking of violins was to be heard in the pauses of the shouting and firing. By-and-by we distinguished "*Vivan los Estados Unidos!*" "*Vivan los Americanos del Norte!*" and the appalling consciousness was forced upon us that we were to be lionized forthwith, and supper but half finished! I appealed to Pedro to shut the door and say we were ill, and would see the people in the morning; but he either did not

understand, or affected not to do so, and before I could explain, the crowd was at the entrance, and pouring into our apartment. The alcaldes came first, and a dozen fiddlers followed. Then came the people in solid column, while the outsiders kept up a perfect storm of vivas,—their upturned, swarthy faces looking singularly wild and forbidding under the light of their torches. Not a tithe was able to enter, yet every one seemed determined to find a place inside, and crowded one upon the other to such a degree that we should have been suffocated outright, had not the alcaldes formed a cordon around us, and kept off the crowd with their canes. The principal or first alcalde, made a speech, full of welcome, and well spiced with patriotism, in which he called us, and all the people of the United States, collectively and individually, friends and brothers, and a great many other endearing names, which I have forgotten; and then everybody wanted to shake hands, and thrust them forward over the heads and under the arms of the front rank, a hundred at a time. But as our visitors generally did not seem to have any clear conception as to which of the party was the illustrious object of their homage, I instructed my companions to shake all the hands within their reach, and pass the owners on. In this wise, and by causing Pedro to invite the entire crowd to drink my health, at my expense, at the next *pulperia*, I finally succeeded in clearing the house,—but our chocolate was cold, and some of our worthy visitors had availed themselves of the "noise and confusion" to pocket all the baked meats. And as we sat disconsolately waiting for more to be cooked, we voted the system of lionizing a bore, and M. quoted Shakspeare:

"Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown,"

with variations suited to our present condition.

The idea of getting the crowd off to the pulperia we all

thought was a particularly happy one; but the sequel proved otherwise. In half an hour our admiring friends, greatly augmented in numbers, all returned; and if they were fervent and enthusiastic before, what were they now? I appeared on the steps of the house and bowed low, and retired. But bows wouldn't answer. Nothing short of a grand procession would furnish an adequate vent to the overflowing feelings of the citizens. Pedro begged for my flag, while messengers were despatched to the Californians at the posada, to solicit their participation in the grand "obsequio." Pending the completion of the arrangements, the crowd continued to increase, completely choking up the street for an entire block. The confusion was dire; the violinists played as if working for their lives, while bombas were let off as fast as they could be collected. Finally, the Californians, refreshed by an ample supper, made their appearance, and at once fell into the spirit of the affair. The flag was unfurled at the head of the column, surrounded by an armed guard of honor; next came the officers and the *musicos*, and then, as the programmes at home say, "the citizens generally." The procession marched through all the principal streets, hurrahing at every corner for "El Norte," the "bello sexo," "Gen. Taylor," the "Supreme Government," in fact for nearly everything, but particularly for the "glorious flag of the North." The national anthem was sung in the plaza, the multitude joining in the chorus with almost frantic fervor, and then the Californians were called upon to sing the national air of the United States, but being unable to give it to their own satisfaction, they sang "Dearest May" instead, with great applause, and as Pedro afterwards told us, "con mucho espiritu," with great spirit!

It was full midnight when the "obsequio" was brought to a close, and our dispositions made for the night. And such a night! I had now my first introduction to the kind of bed in common use in the country, and which I verily

believe was instituted as a punishment for the sins of the people. It consists of an ox-hide drawn, while green, tightly over a stout framework of wood, and afterwards elaborately polished, so as to look like the head of a drum When dry, a slab of marble is a soft and downy thing in comparison with it. It was on such a bed as this, with a smooth and gaudily colored "petate," or mat, and a single sheet spread over the hide, that I was invited to repose. I examined this new instrument of torture narrowly, and finally turned in, with heavy misgivings, particularly as I found that Pedro's mansion was full of fleas, which had already set my nerves on a gallop. I was weary enough, but it was impossible to sleep—the fleas came in hungry squadrons, and the hide bed grew momentarily more rigid and obdurate. I felt my own pulse; it was up to the fever rate, and I began to wish Don Pedro and Don Frederico to regions unmentionable for getting me into such a scrape. A bed on the ground, with my saddle for a pillow and the sky for a roof, would have been luxury itself, compared with this. I got up, unbarred the door, and went out on the corridor. The cool evening air was most welcome, and I vowed audibly not to go inside again. So I roused Ben, who strung me a hammock between the columns of the corridor, in which I succeeded in getting an hour or two of slumber.

When morning came, I told Don Pedro that it was the anniversary of American Independence, and that it was meet and becoming to breakfast with the rest of the Americans at the posada. And leaving Ben to bring round the animals and baggage, I got away as fast as possible from Don Pedro's hospitable but awfully flea-infested dwelling. I found the posada a very nice place indeed, and had the satisfaction of learning that each one of the Californians had had a comfortable *cot* or camp bed, with only a reasonable amount of fleas.

We all breakfasted together, and drank patriotic toasts,

and sang Yankee Doodle, and were altogether appropriately patriotic, to the great delectation of the quidnuncs of Managua, who gathered in crowds around the open doors and windows. They were properly instructed as to the nature of "the day we celebrated," that it was the great feast of St. Jonathan; whereupon they hurrahed for the saint, and even proposed to ring the church bells in his honor. But fearful of another "obsequio," we discouraged this idea, and made all haste to get off as quietly as possible.

At eight o'clock we were in the saddle. It was a gorgeous morning, and the lake of Managua flashed brightly in our eyes as we rode through the grand plaza. The opposite shore was dim and distant, but high and rough in outline, while nearer, a volcanic ridge, or succession of volcanic peaks, projected boldly into the lake, forming a sort of bay, at the head of which Managua was situated. A broad, well-beaten, and level avenue led out from the city, lined on both sides by forests, into which paths diverged in every direction. The road was filled with men and women going to their day's labor in the fields; and from their cheerful, frank air and manner, it was easy to see that we were beyond "war's alarms." At the distance of two leagues we came to the foot of the ridge which I have already mentioned, rising abruptly before us. Here, under a gigantic ceiba, girths were tightened, and preparations made for the ascent, which is by a broad path, partly cut in the hill and built up with masonry. This road was constructed by Gen. Muñoz, to avoid the circuit of the camino real, or cart road, and is creditable to its originator. The ascent was laborious, but the toil was repaid by the views which we caught of the lake and its shores, from places where the precipices allowed no foothold for trees, and whence the eye roamed freely over league upon league of forest and undulating hills, terminating in the blue belt of Chontales and New Segovia. It was a singular position to be thus perched on the face of a cliff,

with high, black, and frowning volcanic rocks on one hand, and a precipice, sheer and yawning, upon the other.

After winding about for half an hour, we reached the summit, from which, upon the other side, the land fell off in a gentle slope. This is the only hill or mountain to be encountered in the whole length of Nicaragua, between the lakes and the Pacific; and this may be avoided by taking the circuit of the cart road. From the summit, two hours and a half of hard riding, over a beautiful country, brought us to the little village of Mateares, distinguished as being utterly destitute of a single object of interest. It is a sort of half-way house in the journey from Granada to Leon, and has a miserable posada or two, where coffee and tortillas may be obtained cheaply, and fleas gratis. We divided our party between the two rival establishments, and ordered water and sacate for the animals, preliminary to undertaking the hot and unprotected ride of three leagues upon the sandy shore of the lake, which came within the next stage of our journey. Don Enrique Pallais, a Frenchman, domesticated in the country, a man of large experience and a kind heart, who was of our party, had his "comadre" in the posada where we stopped, who embraced him affectionately as we entered. She was exceedingly pretty, with a mild, sweet face, and as she was apparently the mistress of the mansion, I felt a little scandalized to find Don Enrique on such familiar terms with her; but he explained this extraordinary relation of "comadre" and "compadre," to my entire satisfaction. He had been sponsor at the baptism of her child, a little yellow chap just tottering about the house, and had thereby assumed the relation of compadre—a kind of second husband, without, however, any marital rights beyond the privilege of an embrace at meeting, after the manner I had witnessed. I afterwards observed that the fervor of the embrace bore a pretty exact ratio to the good looks of the señora. The fact is, I am a "compadre" myself now, and the relation brings

to mind a girlish little creature, singing softly to her baby, at this very hour I dare say, somewhere amongst the hills of San Salvador!

At Mateares the traveller turns suddenly to the right, and descending a steep bank comes at once upon the shore of the lake. For two or three miles a belt of trees intervenes between the water and the cliff, beneath which passes the broad, gravelly road. I had gone ahead of my companions, who were deeply engaged in the concoction of lemonades at the posada, and had this part of the ride alone. I took off my hat, and throwing the rein upon my horse's neck, gave myself up to the silence and the scene. The air was literally loaded with fragrant odors from a hundred varieties of flowers, which blushed amongst the green thickets on every hand, while the waters of the lake flashed here and there between the trees like silver bars; and brilliant birds, noisy parrots, and dignified macaws in fiery plumage, looked down upon me in a familiar way, as if I were an old acquaintance. Several portly iguanas, who were enjoying themselves amongst the loose gravel of the road, seemed to be doubtful whether they should turn out, or force me to do so; and when they did leave the path, it was in a very leisurely manner, and with an expression equivalent to "what a *gringo*, to be riding at noonday, and disturbing respectable iguanas!"

After riding about a league, the belt of forest terminated in a a few gigantic ceibas, and beyond was a broad beach, the bare cliff rising abruptly on one side, and the lake spreading out on the other, without as much as a shrub to break the fervor of the tropical sun. Here a party of muleteers, returning from Leon, were taking their noonday siesta, while the mules straggled about at will, nibbling the green bushes. Here too, for the first time, came fully in sight the great volcano of Momotombo, with the conical island of Momotombita in front, and the broken cones of the volcano of Las Pilas upon its flank. The foreground of rocks and trees, the

SHORE OF LAKE MANAGUA, AND VOLCANO OF MOMOTOMBO.

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strolling mules and reclining figures, completed a picture unsurpassed, in point of novelty and beauty by any which I had seen before, or have witnessed since. Its predominant features are very imperfectly conveyed in the accompanying drawing, subsequently taken from the same point of view.

The muleteers sat up as I rode by, answering my "adios Señores" with "buen viaje, Caballero," and then fell back in the sand again, and drew their sombreros over their faces. The sand of the beach was fetlock deep, and covered all over with white and rose-colored pebbles of pumice-stone. I spurred my horse up to the water, and dismounting led him along its edge, amusing myself by tossing the light pebbles out upon the tiny waves, and watching them come tipping back again, buoyant as corks. Hundreds of wild fowl, cranes, herons, and water-hens lined the shores, or stood soliloquizing on the rocks and sand-spits which projected into the water. They had the courtesy to give me the road as I walked along, but hardly anything more; and only ejaculated "cluck!" when I shouted at them, which I suppose meant "don't be kicking up a row here, at noonday." In fact I began to think that all nature, animate and inanimate, had entered into a grand compact to take a quiet snooze at this precise hour every day. The lake itself seemed dreaming, and the smoke from Momotombo rose in such a sleepy way, that I almost felt drowsy in watching it, and should certainly have lain down in the sand and taken a nap, had there been a tree or bush to protect me from the hot sun. My only alternative was therefore to jog on, which I did until I came to a place where the cliff projected forward almost to the water's edge. Here I paused, and looked back for my companions, but they were not to be seen.

Beyond this point the lake formed a little bay, and rocks worn into fantastic shapes by the water supplanted the sandy beach. These rocks seemed to be composed of a kind of volcanic breccia, for fragments of pumice-stone, bits of primi-

tive rock, and an occasional large piece of trachyte were visible in the white and slightly porous masses. Yet, at a little distance, stratified sand rock appeared, overlying the breccia, and anon a vein of basaltic or trachytic rock, or a frowning heap of rough, black, and blistered masses of these materials, superimposed on the sand rock or conglomerate, would completely confound my uneducated notions of geological propriety. I presume all this apparent confusion is of easy explanation amongst those versed in the natural sciences: and if (as is more than likely) these can make nothing out of my description, they had better go there and examine for themselves. Geologically, as well as geographically and topographically, there is no more interesting region than that of Nicaragua, nor one which can better repay the investigations of the student of nature.

I continued beneath the broiling sun for nearly a league further, passing through patches of chapparal, or thorny bushes, resembling the willow in the shape and color of their leaves, which found a precarious hold amongst the rocks and in the barren sands. Beyond these the track divided, one branch running up a ravine into the woods, and the other keeping along the lake. I was at a dead loss as to which to take, and did not much relish the idea of sitting there solus until the party came up. While in this perplexity I heard the crowing of cocks in the direction of the ravine, and riding in, soon found myself in a broad path which led to a cluster of huts, situated so as to command a full view of the lake, without being seen from the shore. I despatched one of the niños, under promise of the magnificent reward of one medio, to watch for my companions, and tossing the bridle to a mozo, walked into the best hut and took possession of the best hammock, which a motherly old lady undertook to swing backward and forth for me, while I should endeavor to compensate myself for my broken slumbers of the preceding night. Sleep came without coaxing, and I had a grand siesta there

amongst those kind Indians. I was roused by our *comisario*, who was hurrying on to order dinner for us at Nagarote, and I determined to push on with him. He had seduced one of the party to take his old mule, and had now got the best horse in the company, my own excepted. It was a sharp proceeding, as will be seen in the sequel.

The ride to Nagarote was a fine one; in places the road came down to the lake, and then wound back again amongst the hills, affording a most agreeable diversity to the traveller. At one place we reached a small valley, at the bottom of which flowed a limpid, rippling little stream—the only one we had encountered since we left Granada. The ground was beaten hard, and the underbrush removed over a wide space, for this was a famous resting place with the carreteros and arrieros. Two or three little groups of travellers were now waiting there, mixing their cups of *tiste* from the stream, while their animals were left to roam at discretion. They invited us to join them, but with the prospect of a good dinner only one league ahead, we declined, and galloped on, and on, until I began to think that our going to Nagarote was a grand flam, or that the town itself had walked off. That famous league we ever afterwards distinguished as the "five mile league." We nevertheless finally came to Nagarote, a little scurvy looking town, redeemed by but one really good looking house, which I was glad to learn was the posada. The landlady was "fat and forty," and welcomed us right cordially; she liked the Americans, she said; they had "mucho dinero," much money, and paid double what other folks did, without grumbling. I ordered the best dinner she could afford for the entire party, and then took to the hammock again, to catch another installment of sleep. It was full an hour before the remainder of the party came dropping in, one by one, for the order of march had been completely broken up, after leaving Matearas. Dinner was almost ready, but yet three or four were missing. Finally these arrived,

two of them on foot, and holding one of their companions in his saddle. He was the verdant young gentleman who had exchanged his horse for the mule of the comisario, which had completely broken down some two or three leagues back, and had been abandoned in the woods. He had attempted to walk the rest of the way, but the exercise brought on chills and fever. He was put to bed, bathed with brandy, and wrapped in blankets, and having perspired freely, came on next morning, all the better apparently for the attack.

I dined with Don Enrique, at the cane-built house of a poor priest, with whom he was acquainted. The padre was absent, but his housekeeper, a tall, pale woman, with large, expressive black eyes, welcomed us very cordially. She had about her some fifteen or twenty little children, collected from the poorest families, to whom she taught reading and writing. Her humble dwelling was destitute of a single article of luxury or embellishment, unless a finely painted face of the Virgin, suspended over a little altar in an inner room, can be called such. I asked her if she was paid for her pains? She shook her head, and her eyes kindled and her brow expanded, as she slowly raised her face to heaven: her reward was there. How little do the sectaries and bigots of our own country know of the devotion, and fervent, unselfish piety of many of those whom they so unsparingly denounce as the impure ministers of a debased religion! When I last passed through Nagarote, I called to see the gentle teacher, but the hut was deserted, and rank weeds were growing around it. I inquired for her at the posada; the old lady did not answer me, but her eyes filled with moisture. The Santa Anita was dead; she had gone to the reward for which she had striven; the reward of the meek and the lowly in spirit! Shall I confess it? The heretic stranger dropped a tear to the memory of the Santa Anita.

We experienced great tribulation in Nagarote in getting animals to replace two or three of the scurvy mules which

had been imposed upon us in Granada, and which were here unanimously condemned. We told the man whom the emprestador had sent with them, that he must supply their places; but he couldn't. All the horses and mules in the place had been sent to the fields, to prevent their being seized for the use of the army. "No hay, Señor!" there are none, was the invariable response to our inquiries. But we were bound to get on; so I instructed our *comisario* to produce the government order, which he carried in his pocket, and take it to the first alcalde, with my compliments, and the intimation that horses must be forthcoming, or his name should be faithfully reported to the "Gobierno Supremo." The effect was magical; horses, and good ones, appeared incontinently; whereupon I conceived a high respect for the dingy bit of paper which had wrought the miracle, and copied it for the benefit of future travellers. Here it is:—

Sebastian Salinas, Ministro de Relaciones del Supmo. Gobno. del Estado de Nicaragua.

De orden del mismo, hago saber á todas las autoridades de los pueblos del transito de esta Ciudad á la de Granada, q. el Sr. Oficial Don Jose Dolores Bermudez, á la cabeza de nueve o diez Norte-Americanos, va á conducir á esta dicha Ciudad al Exmo. Sr. Jorge Squier Mntro. Pleinpotenciario del Gobno. Supmo. de los Estados Unidos del Norte cerca del de Nicaragua residente en Granada. Ordeno y mando á las espresadas autoridades del transito q. no les pongan embarazo á dichos Sres, y ademas en su regreso con el Sr. Squier le guarden á este los respetos y consideraciones q. exije su alto caracter.

Dado en Leon, Sellado con el Sello del Estado, en la Casa de Gobno. a los 28 dia del mes de Junio, de 1849.

Les prestaran los recursos que necesiten previa indennizacion. } [L.S.] S. SALINAS.

It was late in the afternoon, and dark thunder clouds were gathering in the east, clustering around the bald, burned peak of Momotombo, when we started from Nagarote for Pueblo Nuevo, where we were to pass the night. The winds were fitful, but cool and refreshing, and I unstrapped my poncho and threw

it over the saddle bow, preparatory to encountering the storm that was closing around us. It came, fierce and black, before we had accomplished a single league of the five which intervened between the two villages. In an instant we were enveloped in the thick darkness, and the rain poured down in torrents. We could distinguish each other only when the lightnings blazed lividly around us. We left the horses to their own guidance, only taking care not to be dragged from our seats by the projecting limbs and overhanging branches, which constitute the chief source of danger in travelling in these countries in the night-time. The road became one pool of water, and the unshod horses slipped constantly, in a way not at all calculated to quiet one's nerves. By-and-by the storm passed, rushing forth upon the expanse of the Pacific, and the full moon glanced through the rifts of the passing clouds, in a strange, fitful way, momentarily revealing tall spectral trunks and skeleton branches, and then leaving us in utter darkness. It was a wierd looking forest through which we passed, and the entire party seemed to catch its gloomy influences, and rode on, for more than hour, slowly and in silence. Suddenly, however, the spell was broken by one of the number striking up "Hail Columbia;" the others joined spontaneously in the chorus; and when it was done, a great shout was given, and every horse was spurred into a gallop, spite of mud and water, nor was a rein drawn until, emerging from the forest, we found ourselves saluted by a myriad dogs in the streets of Pueblo Nuevo. Here we were met by two or three Americans who had started with the escort, but had been left here in charge of one of their number who had been injured by a fall. Anticipating our arrival, they had secured places for us in the village, quartering one detachment here and another there, in true military style. The house assigned to me and my personal companions was the most imposing and aristocratic mansion in the place, inasmuch as it was twice as large as any other, plastered with

mud, and whitewashed withal. It was occupied by a well-dressed Señora and her five daughters, all attired in their finest array, with satin slippers, and their dark hair newly braided, and tipped out with a bunch of variegated ribbons. Upon one side of the principal apartment was an immense hollowed log, which was the granary; and upon the other a wax figure of Christ on the cross, surrounded by weeping Marys and bearded Romans, superabundantly tinselled; the whole enclosed in a large glass case, hung round with chaplets of fresh flowers. The five daughters were evidently putting their best feet foremost, but seemed to be greatly perplexed as to which was "El Ministro." Bespattered with mud, wayworn and weary, none of the party looked particularly imposing, and I thought I could discover symptoms of disappointment amongst the señoritas. They nevertheless were attentive, and gave us cigaritas all round, and brought coals in a silver cup for us to light them by; and what was better, they gave us a capital supper, with knives for three, and forks and spoons for four of the eight who sat down at the table, which was rather more than the usual allowance. Before we had finished, however, the alcalde came, but we declined talking until supper was over; and meantime the municipal dignitaries perched themselves on the big log, and looked at us in silence. We were getting very indifferent to official attentions; and so dismissed our visitors with all practicable expedition, but with a great profusion of compliments, which they seemed to relish mightily.

I got a bed with a canvass bottom, and slept dreamlessly the entire night, and until eight o'clock the next morning. The atmosphere was all the clearer for the storm of the preceding evening, and the village looked particularly bright and cheerful under the morning sun. Differing from the other towns which we had passed, each house was here surrounded by a hedge, or rather fence, of the columnar cactus, which in some places was low and even, but in others shot up to the height

of fifteen or twenty feet, resembling palisades, above which just appeared the thatched roofs of the dwellings. "A great country, this," said W——, "where they plant their fences!"

We were now within eight leagues of Leon, and, with the whole day before us, were not so expeditious in our movements as we might have been under other circumstances. We breakfasted leisurely, and departed with becoming deliberation. Beyond Pueblo Nuevo, the road, as usual, was through a forest, with here and there open spaces called "*jicarales*," from the *jicara*, or calabash trees, that were scattered over them, and which in size, and the appearance of the leaves and fruit, resembled the apple trees at home.

The broad and well beaten road, hard and smooth from the rain of the preceding night, was lined with palms and trees covered with blossoms, which loaded the air with their rich perfumes, and from which the white and rose-tinted petals fell like snow, beneath the touch of the cool morning breeze. Here a group of monkeys looked down upon us with queer grimaces—there a flock of parroquets, nestling *perdu* amongst the leaves, dashed wildly away upon our approach, while pigeons, and red-legged partridges graciously condescended to step out of the way and allow us to pass, without, however, exhibiting the slightest degree of alarm. Hundreds of lizards, bright green and gold, darted like rays of light before us; and large ants, each bearing a fragment of a green leaf above its back, marched across the path in solid columns, like fairy armies with their tiny banners. Their nests, built in the forks of the trees, resembled large bee-hives, and their paths, from which all obstacles were removed, for the width of several inches, could be traced by the eye in every direction amongst the bushes.

We rode briskly along, and in less than two hours came to a ravine, shut in by high banks, and descended by a series of steep steps which would have been deemed utterly impractica-

ble at home, but which seemed to be quite a matter of course to the horses here. This place was called Axusco ; and the ravine once entered, it was picturesque beyond description. The soil seemed moister than on the higher ground, and the verdure was correspondingly rich and dense. Masses of vines, leaves, and flowers were piled one on the other in the utmost luxuriance, and the shadows fell with a breadth and depth seen nowhere except under the tropics, and rarely equalled even there. It was a suspicious place nevertheless ; and one or two dilapidated crosses, hardly visible amongst the undergrowth, showed that it had been the scene of tragic events, of robbery and murder. I afterwards often passed it in the night, but never without my hand on my sword-hilt.

We rested awhile at Axusco, then spurring up the opposite bank, resumed our march. The same forest shut us in, but paths, diverging here and there to distant estates and haciendas, gave evidence that we were approaching the city of Leon. Finally we arrived where the trees became more scattered, and through occasional openings we caught confused glimpses of broad fields, green hills, and towering volcanoes. These glimpses revealed a section of country surpassing in its capabilities any we had yet seen. I hurried on impatiently, and in a few moments, emerging from the forest, the great plain of Leon opened grandly before me !

I had left my companions behind, and stood alone on the borders of this ocean of verdure. Stretching away, chequered with hedge-rows and studded with tree clumps and tall palms, the eye traversed leagues on leagues of green fields, belted with forests, and bounded on the right by high mountains, their regular cones rising like spires to heaven, while low hills of emerald circled round on the left, like the seats of an amphitheatre. In front the view was uninterrupted, and the wearied eye sought in vain to discover its limit. A purple haze rested in the distance, and beneath it the waves of the

great Pacific rolled in, unbrokenly, from China and the Indies!

It was the beginning of the rainy season, and vegetation had shot up in renewed youth and vigor: no dust had yet dimmed the almost transparent green of the leaves, nor had the heat withered the delicate blades of grass and spires of maize which carpeted the level fields, nor the young tendrils which twined delicately around the branches of the trees, or hung, blushing with buds and flowers, from the parent stem. Above all shone down the glorious sun, and the whole broad expanse seemed pulsating with life beneath its genial rays.

Never before had I gazed upon a scene so grand and magnificent as this. Well and truly has the ancient chronicler described it as "a country plain and beautiful, full of pleasantness, so that he who fared therein deemed that he journeyed in the ways of Paradise." The impression produced upon my companions, who had in the meantime joined me, was not less striking than on myself. We had heard much of the great plain of Leon, but the reality far surpassed the anticipations which we had formed of its extent and beauty. As we rode on, however, we were surprised to find that, although a great quantity of land was cleared, not more than half of it was really under cultivation; a remark which we had subsequently frequent occasion to make, for agriculture, since the independence, owing to the unfortunate condition of the country, has very much declined.

We had anticipated some kind of demonstration upon our arrival in Leon, and remembering our plight at San Carlos, had fixed upon "El Convento," about four miles from the city, as the place where we should make the necessary changes in our garb, preparatory to encountering the dignitaries and citizens of the capital. The convent was yet a league in advance, and meantime we wore the soiled and mud-bespattered garments with which we had passed through

the storm of the preceding night. We had not gone far, however, into the open plain, before we discovered a party of horsemen galloping rapidly towards us. As they approached, we perceived that some wore military uniforms, while the others were dressed as simple citizens. They came near, and one of the party, who was evidently an American, looked hard at us, and for a moment seemed in doubt. We bowed, and would have passed on, but turning short, our supposed countryman inquired, in English, if we had passed a party of Americans, and the American minister, on the road. The question was an awkward one; I laughed outright, and matters were taking a very ridiculous turn, when one of our escort opportunely coming up, introduced us to Dr. Livingston, American Consul in Leon, by whom we were duly presented to the accompanying officers. The scene was sufficiently ludicrous all round, and I thought the seriousness of our new friends was strongly tried. I might have enjoyed the affair very much, had I not been at once informed that a large company of gentlemen from the city, a hundred or two in number, with the principal officers of State, and the Bishop of the church, in person, at their head, were coming out to meet us. But when it was added that they had already passed the convent, and were not half a mile distant, I was horrified. I entreated the doctor to ride back, and say that we would join them beyond the convent, but before the movement could be made, the whole cavalcade came in sight, and descrying our group, approached us at a gallop. There was no retreat, and we moved on in despair. First came the Bishop in his purple robes, splendidly mounted, flanked by a group of priests, and followed by a train of officers, in uniforms absolutely dazzling in the noonday sun! * * * * * *

Suffice it to say, we met, and there were congratulations, and welcomes, and many fine things said,—and if we did not leave a sufficiently distinct idea of republican simplicity on

the minds of our new friends, it will be useless for any one to undertake it hereafter. They were, however, all well-bred caballeros, and with true Spanish *politesse*, kept their gravity, which, W. remarked, displayed "extraordinary self-control!" I nevertheless observed that some of the younger officers had occasion to wipe their faces with their handkerchiefs very often, and were long about it. But then it was a hot day, and they had ridden fast.

I was, however, determined not to enter the city in my present plight, and when we reached the convent, excused myself, and left the cavalcade to proceed, promising to rejoin it in a few minutes. The "convento" was only an Indian hut, of which I incontinently, and not in the best of humors, took possession, politely turning the family, old ones, babies, pigs, and chickens, all out of doors. Ben produced the diplomatic suit, which I had not seen since it left the tailor's, and displayed extraordinary address in adjusting it. Ten minutes sufficed to complete the transformation, but I discarded the *chapeau*, and stuck to the broad-brimmed Panama which I had purchased in Granada, much to Ben's dissatisfaction, who was bent on retrieving the credit of the legation.

We overtook the cavalcade a few hundred yards from where we had left them. They had halted beneath some large trees, and our escort, which had meantime come up, we also found on the spot, marshalled in the same order as when we left Granada. A dashing young officer rode up to me, as I approached, and begged to be permitted "to carry the glorious flag of El Norte," which request was, of course, graciously acceded to. Matters now began to take a more promising turn, and as per *programme* of arrangements, I found myself, with Dr. Livingston and the bishop, placed at the head of the procession, which formed in column, three deep. The Bishop, Don George de Viteri y Ungo, impressed me, from the first, as a man far above the ordinary mark, well informed, courteous, and affable, with manners which

would have graced the proudest courts of Europe. I soon found that he had been in the United States, had travelled extensively in the Old World, and altogether knew more of men and things than could have been surmised of an ecclesiastic, however high in station, in this secluded part of the world. I was nevertheless taken a little aback, I must confess, when he inquired of me about Forrest and Miss Clifton, and whether they were yet on the stage. He had seen them both at the Park Theatre, and had been delighted, he said, with their acting, although he had not understood a word which they said. I told him that the Park had been burned, and that it probably would never be rebuilt, and concurred with him in regarding it as a "great pity." Mr. Clay, too, he had heard speak, and had *felt* all he said, without understanding his language. "Ah!" exclaimed the Bishop, "after all, there is more in the feeling of the speaker himself, and in his manner, than in his words;—to arouse the sympathy of the hearer is the true secret of oratory!" Not bad criticism, I thought, for Nicaragua.

As we advanced over the plain, the cultivated fields became more numerous, and the evidences of industry more abundant. It was with something, I thought, of the spirit of prophecy, that the Bishop swept his hand around the horizon and said, "We want only an infusion of your people, to make this broad land an Eden of beauty, and the garden of the world." He pointed out to me the nine volcanoes which skirted the plain; the gigantic Viejo; the regular Telica; the riven Orota, and lofty Momotombo, which now rose clear and distinct before our eyes; these, said he, are the works of the Great Architect, and *that*, the puny achievement of man! I looked in the direction which he pointed, and there rose the towers of the great Cathedral, white and massive above a wilderness of tiled roofs, foliage, and fruit trees. Notwithstanding his philosophical depreciation, I thought there was an expression of pride in the face of the Bishop, as

his eyes rested upon this architectural wonder of Nicaragua; nor was his complacency unwarranted, for the Cathedral of Leon is a structure not unworthy a place beside the most imposing sacred edifices of either continent.

We now rapidly approached the city, and entered the suburbs, which corresponded entirely with those of Granada and Masaya. Here was drawn up the carriage of the Bishop, in readiness for use, in case I should prefer it. I however, chose to continue on horseback, and the polite Bishop commended my choice. Passing the Indian barrio, or suburb of Guadelupe, the people falling on their knees as the Bishop approached, we descended abruptly into a deep ravine, at the bottom of which flowed a clear and beautiful stream, and ascended upon the other side by a broad, graded way, paved with stones, into the city proper. I had merely time to observe that the streets were in gala dress, when the thunder of cannon, and the sudden pealing of the bells of the churches, above which those of the cathedral rose full and distinct, proclaimed our arrival. "Vivan los Estados Unidos del Norte!" exclaimed the officer who bore my flag, as he dashed at full speed to the head of the column. The whole party caught the spirit, and echoed the "viva," and the Bishop himself waved his hand and cried "Adelantamos!" On! I remember but little more, except a confused sound of trampling horses, shouting people, the ringing of bells, the thunder of cannon, and a cloud of dust, until we rode into the great plaza. Here the entire garrison was drawn up, who presented arms and cheered for the United States as we entered. The band struck up a martial air, and the ladies of the metropolis waved their handkerchiefs to us from the balconies of the House of the Government. We halted for a moment, and the alcalde mayor made a speech, which was delightfully short, but of which, amidst the clangor of the bells and the shouts of the multitude, I heard not a word. I responded in three sentences, which I presume were equally unintelligible: and then we

moved on, amidst a dense throng, to the house of the American Consul, above which the stripes and stars floated proudly to the breeze. It was with unmingled feelings of satisfaction that, shaking hands with the Bishop, and bowing to the rest of the cavalcade, I spurred through the archway into the court of the Dr.'s residence, and away from the noise and the dust of the crowded streets. But the public curiosity was not yet satisfied, and the people thronged into the courtyard to stare at the apparition from El Norte. Nor was it until the gateway was closed and barred that we succeeded in escaping from the multitude, and even then the iron gratings of the windows were festooned with inquisitive boys, who seemed to hang one to another like swarming bees. Some considerate alcaldes, however, by a judicious application of their canes, finally cleared these away, and then we got an hour for privacy and dinner.

High mass had been said the day before in the church of La Mercedes for our safe arrival, and now a Te Deum was chaunted in the cathedral in acknowledgement of the protection which Heaven had vouchsafed to us. In the evening fireworks were let off in the plaza, and we were serenaded by the band attached to the garrison, which, to our surprise, we found almost as effective as any that we had ever heard.

We found that the city was not free from the alarm which had existed at Granada; and although no outbreak had occurred in this part of the state, the government, acting on the principle that "precaution is the parent of safety," had taken the most complete measures to guard against surprise, and to check promptly the first indications of disorder. The roof and towers of the cathedral, an impregnable fortress in itself, were occupied by troops; so too was the church of La Mercedes; and the evacuated convent attached to it had been converted into a cuartel of cavalry. It was immediately opposite the house of Dr. Livingston, and I observed that the horses of the lancers were kept constantly saddled, in readi-

ness for action at a moment's warning. Advanced posts of troops were also established in every principal street, and after the eight o'clock bell had struck, there was no cessation of the fierce "*Quien vivas?*" and wakeful "*Alertes!*" of the sentinels.

The day subsequent to our arrival was devoted to receiving visits from the functionaries and leading citizens of Leon. Amongst them all, none impressed me more favorably than the Presbitero Dr. Disiderio de la Quadra, then Vicar of the bishopric, a man of great dignity of manners, and of a character above the remotest taint of suspicion. He was accompanied by a number of the dignitaries of the church, and spoke of his country, its wants, and prospects, with a force and freedom which I had little expected to hear. Indeed, I soon discovered that the better portion of the population fully comprehended the evils under which they suffered, and only required that exterior influences should be exercised in their favor, instead of against them, as it had been hitherto, in order to effect their removal. The revolutionary spirit had exhausted itself, and the universal desire was now for peace and quiet, stability in public affairs, and moderation in their administration. All hoped much from the sympathy and co-operation of the United States, and took new energy from the circumstance that they had attracted the attention and awakened the interest of its government. No better evidence of the truth of these observations could be desired, than the feeling exhibited on the occasion of my official presentation, which took place a few days after my arrival, publicly, in the hall of the Government House, which was appropriately fitted up for the occasion. The proceedings were characterized by the greatest decorum, and a degree of enthusiasm which it would hardly be proper for me to attempt to describe. Indeed, in introducing my own address on the occasion, with the reply of Señor Ramirez, the Supreme Director of the State, I am conscious that I am incurring the risk of being

misunderstood and misrepresented; but as I have set out with the purpose of vindicating the public sentiment of Nicaragua, not less than of making known the character and condition of its people, I conceive that I cannot do better than to introduce occasional documents of this kind, especially when they contribute to the completeness of my narrative, and to the understanding of the present posture of affairs in that country.

ADDRESS.

"SENOR DIRECTOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF NICARAGUA:

"I have to-day the honor of laying before you my credentials as the Representative of the United States of North America, near the Government of this Republic. The personal satisfaction which I feel upon this occasion is greatly enhanced by the many evidences which I have already had afforded to me, of the friendly sentiments which are entertained by the Government and people of Nicaragua towards those of the United States. I can assure you, upon behalf of my Government, that these sentiments are fully reciprocated, and that it is its earnest desire to cultivate, in every way, the most cordial relations with this Republic. Of this the official letters from the city of Washington, which I have now the honor to deliver to yourself and his Excellency the Minister of Foreign Relations, will give abundant evidence.

"It shall be my aim, Sir, in my official and personal intercourse with the Government and people of this State, not only to confirm the present harmony and good correspondence which exist between the two Republics, but to create new ties of friendship, and to promote a closer and more intimate relationship between them. They, Sir, possess common interests; they both stand before the world the avowed supporters of liberal principles, and the vindicators of Republican Institutions; the true policy of both is the preservation of order, and the encouragement of education and industry at home, and the maintenance of peace abroad. It is proper, therefore, that they should present an example of that fraternity which it is the desire of my Government, as I know it is of your Excellency, should exist between the two Republics.

"To this end, and to secure the permanent welfare of both, it is essential that they should pursue a system of policy exclusively American. In the language of an eminent statesman of my own country, (whose memory is

reverently cherished, and whose words are treasured with care by every American citizen,) 'in order that the fabric of international connections between the Republics of this continent may rise, in the lapse of years, with a grandeur and harmony of proportions corresponding with the magnitude of the means placed by Providence in their power, its foundations must be laid in principles of politics and morals new and distasteful to the thrones and dominions of the elder world, but coextensive with the surface of the globe, and lasting as the changes of time.'

"A cardinal principle in this policy is a total exclusion of foreign influence from the domestic and international affairs of the American Republics; and while we would cultivate friendly intercourse, and promote trade and commerce with all the world, and invite to our shores and to the enjoyment of our institutions the people of all nations, we should proclaim, in language distinct and firm, that the American continent belongs to Americans, and is sacred to Republican Freedom. We should also let it be understood, that if foreign powers encroach upon the territories or invade the rights of any one of the American States, they inflict an injury upon all, which it is alike the duty and determination of all to see redressed.

"Señor Director! Providence has peculiarly favored the country of which you are the worthy Chief Executive. I have passed through your territories from the Atlantic ocean, through your rivers and magnificent lakes, along the bases of your lofty mountains, and over your broad and beautiful plains, until the wide expanse of the Pacific opens before me, and I can almost hear the sound of its waves as they break upon your western shores. At every step I have been deeply impressed with the capabilities of the country, and the vastness of its internal resources. I have seen, also, with pleasure, the many evidences of industry and civilization which exist within your borders, and I have been led to indulge the belief that the time is not far distant, when the commerce of two hemispheres shall find within your territories an easy passage from sea to sea. It is one of the objects of my mission to assist in an enterprise so important to the whole world—an enterprise, the successful prosecution of which must enable this country to attain a degree of prosperity second to that of no other on the globe. With your cordial co-operation, (of which I am well assured,) and of that of the citizens of this Republic, I hope soon to have it in my power to announce to my Government, that the initiatives to this grand and glorious enterprise have already been taken.

"And here, Sir, you will permit me to express the profound regret which I feel, that I find this Republic afflicted by civil commotions. Both

the principles and policy of the United States make us desire that this and the other Republics of Central America should be prosperous and powerful. We feel a deep interest in their welfare, but this we know can only be promoted by enlightened and stable Governments. The enjoyment of liberty, and the maintenance of individual rights, cannot be secured without permanent order, and this can only spring from a sacred observance of law. I trust, Sir, that the patriotic citizens of Nicaragua, whatever their differences of opinion, will all unite in an earnest endeavor to restore peace to the State. Nothing, Sir, could give me personally greater satisfaction, and I am certain nothing could be more acceptable to the Government and people of the United States, and to the friends of Republican Institutions throughout the world.

"I will not, Sir, detain you further. I can only reiterate the friendly sentiments of my Government and countrymen, and assure your Excellency, and the distinguished officers of the State and army around you, as also the illustrious Bishop and reverend prelates and clergy, of my personal high consideration and regard. Allow me also, through you, to return my thanks for the many kind attentions which I have received from the magistrates and citizens of the Republic, and to express the high pleasure which I have experienced in learning from my countrymen, who have lately been detained by unforeseen circumstances in the country, the uniform kindness and courtesy with which they have been treated. I am proud to learn that the name of AMERICAN has been a passport to every Nicaraguan heart. That the new relations which are this day opened between this Republic and my own, may result in lasting benefit to both, is, Sir, my sincere prayer, and to this end I shall direct my most earnest endeavors."

To this address the Supreme Director, Señor Don NORBERTO RAMIREZ, replied as follows:

REPLY.

"SIR,—The satisfaction which I experience in having the honor of receiving, for the first time, a representative of the Republic of North America, is only equalled by the aspirations and high hopes which that event inspires. The gratitude with which your words have animated me, the extraordinary intervention of your Government under the circumstances with which Nicaragua is surrounded, impose on me the pleasing duty of returning thanks to Divine Providence for its benefits.

"Nicaragua has long felt the necessity of sheltering itself under the

bright banner of the North American Confederacy; but the time which the Arbiter of nations had designated for such high happiness and consequent prosperity had not arrived. Before we despatched a Legation to the American Minister at Guatemala, and even before the treaty relative to a canal was entered into with Dr. Brown, (a citizen of your Republic,) we had made some advances to the American Government with a view to this happy consummation; but our hopes were scarcely sustained by their result. But I now see all the elements of a happy future brought before us; there is good faith in the Government with which I am connected; the friendliest feelings towards North America pervades every NICARAGUAN heart; and we have the assurances of the sympathy and support of the American Government. We have consequently all things which can be desired to make available the advantages with which Heaven has surrounded us. Our State, considering its geographical position, ought to be the most prosperous in Spanish America; but our inexperience at the time of our separation from Spain—our limited resources, and the civil commotions that have intervened, have retarded the happy day which is now dawning upon us. I am certain that the Government which you represent, can appreciate the difficulties which have surrounded this Republic. Your Excellency being able properly to estimate these circumstances, must already have formed a just idea of the condition of this part of Central America, and of the position of its Government. Believing therefore that the best intentions exist upon your part towards us, as I know there is the happiest disposition on ours, I entertain no doubts that we shall succeed in establishing the most intimate relations between the two Republics, and in opening the way to the consummation of that most glorious enterprise which it has been reserved for the successors of the immortal Washington to undertake and perfect. I shall have the greatest pleasure in being able to contribute my humble share towards this result, and to the consequent happiness of Nicaragua. I thank you, Sir, and through you, your Government, for its proffered coöperation in so glorious an enterprise.

"Let us begin, Sir, this great work under these bright auspices, and we shall be sure of obtaining the best results. The people of the two American Continents are contemplating us; it is possible that for what we shall do, future generations shall cherish our memory: at least we shall have the conscious satisfaction of having neglected no means, omitted no sacrifice, in securing the grand objects so ardently desired by two sister Republics, determined mutually to sustain their interests, their honor, their integrity, and the principles of continental freedom."

An incident occurred, at the close of this reply, which perhaps would have startled more rigid sticklers for form and etiquette than were assembled on that occasion; but which I mention, for the same reasons that have induced me to give place to the above quotations. The Director had just concluded his reply, and the entire assemblage was yet still and attentive, when a young officer, distinguished not less for his ardent patriotism than for his bravery in the field, and his usefulness as a citizen, Col. Francisco Diaz Zapata, advancing suddenly beyond the line of officers, commenced an impassioned apostrophe to the flag of the United States, which, entwined with that of Nicaragua, was suspended above the chair of the Executive. The effect was electrical, and the whole of the assemblage seemed to catch the spirit of the speaker, whose appearance, action, and language were those of the intensest emotion. They pressed eagerly forward, as if anxious to treasure every word which fell from his lips; and when he had concluded, forgetting all other considerations, their enthusiasm broke forth in loud and protracted "vivas," which were caught up and echoed by the people in the plaza, and the soldiers of the garrison. I subjoin a literal copy of the address:

SALUTACION A LA BANDERA DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS.

POR SENOR FRANCISCO DIAZ ZAPATA.

"¡Presajio de poder y de grandeza!
¡Enseña illustre de virtud y gloria!
Yo te contemplo en tu sublime alteza;
Y al contemplarte siento
Que de mi Patria ensalzaras la historia.
Esas franjas hermosas,
Y el emblema feliz de tus Estrellas,
Que ajitadas del viento
Ondean y relucen majestuosas

Como astros rutilantes, y mas bellas:
El hasta fuerte y noble,
Y ese cuadro, del sólido figura;
Que la herida cerviz ya, no mas doble
Nicaragua en su triste desventura;
Revélanme que harás con tu presencia,
Rodeada de esplendor y de potencia.
"Bajo tu sombra, libertad respira
El activo Varon americano,
Que la memoria deificar aspira
De Washington glorioso:
Bajo tu sombra, se alza soberano
El poder de las leyes;
Y el saber y la ventura crecen
Con vigor prodijioso,
Que pesa sobre el cetro de los Reyes.
Y los Heroes de America enaltecen
Su memoria sagrada,
Sus sepulcros, su sangre de guerreros,
Y el triunfo de tu espada,
Bajo el dulce brillar de tus luceros.
Todo bajo tu imperio tiene vida,
Portentosa Bandera esclarecida.
Yo te saludo de entusiasmo lleno;
Y henchido de placer y de esperanza,
Mi corazon palpita dentro el seno
Con tan fuerte latido,
Que el pecho ardiente á respirar no alcanza.
La suave y fresca brisa,
Del alto Sol los claros resplandores,
El aire enrarecido,
De los Cielos la placida sonrisa,
Y el balsamico aliento de las flores,
Saludante conmigo.
Celebrando del modo mas plausible
Tu advenimiento amigo
A mi Patria doliente y compasible,
Llenala de tu honor y tu grandeza,
Y abate á su adversario la cabeza."

CHAPTER IX.

THE CITY OF LEON—ORIGINALLY BUILT ON THE SHORES OF LAKE MANAGUA—CAUSE OF ITS REMOVAL—ITS PRESENT SITE—DWELLINGS OF ITS INHABITANTS—STYLE OF BUILDING—DEVASTATION OF THE CIVIL WARS—PUBLIC BUILDINGS—THE GREAT CATHEDRAL—ITS STYLE OF ARCHITECTURE; INTERIOR; MAGNIFICENT VIEW FROM THE ROOF—THE "CUARTO DE LOS OBISPOS," OR GALLERY OF THE BISHOPS—THE UNIVERSITY—THE BISHOP'S PALACE—"CASA DEL GOBIERNO"—"CUARTEL GENERAL"—THE CHURCHES OF LA MERCED, CALVARIO, RECOLECCION—HOSPITAL OF SAN JUAN DE DIOS—STONE BRIDGE—INDIAN MUNICIPALITY OF SUBTIABA—POPULATION OF LEON—PREDOMINANCE OF INDIAN POPULATION—DISTINCTION OF STOCKS—MIXED RACES—SOCIETY OF LEON—THE FEMALES; THEIR DRESS—SOCIAL GATHERINGS; THE "TERTULIA"—HOW TO "BREAK THE ICE" AND OPEN A BALL—NATIVE DANCES—PERSONAL CLEANLINESS OF THE PEOPLE—GENERAL TEMPERANCE—"AGUARDIENTE"—AND "ITALIA"—FOOD—THE TORTILLA—FRIJOLES—PLANTAINS—THE MARKETS—PRIMITIVE CURRENCY—MEALS—COFFEE, CHOCOLATE, AND "TISTE"—DULCES—TRADE OF LEON.

THE city of Leon is situated in latitude 12° 25′ north, and longitude 86° 57′ west. As I have elsewhere mentioned, it was founded in 1523, by Hernandez de Cordova, the conqueror of the country and the founder of Granada. Its original site was at the head of the western bay of Lake Managua, near the base of the great volcano of Momotombo, at a place now called Moabita, or, as it is spelled in the early chronicles, Ymbita, where its ruins still exist, overgrown by trees undistinguishable from those of the surrounding forests. This site was abandoned in the year 1610, for that now occupied by the city, which was then the seat of a large Indian town called Subtiaba. There is a tradition that a curse was pronounced upon the old town by the Pope,

when he heard of the murder there, in 1549, by Hernando de Contreras, of Antonio de Valdivieso, third bishop of Nicaragua, who opposed the cruelty and oppression towards the Indians practised by Contreras, and who, for this reason, fell under his anger. In consequence of this curse, it is said, the city was visited by a succession of calamities, which became insupportable; and the inhabitants, driven to despair, finally, on the 2d of January, 1610, after a solemn fast, with the flag of Spain and the officers of the municipality at their head, marched to the site now occupied by the city, and there proceeded to lay out a new town. The cruel and sacrilegious deed of Contreras is, even yet, mentioned with horror; and many of the people believe that the stains of the blood of the bishop, who fled to the church, and died of his wounds at the foot of the altar, are yet visible upon its ruined walls, a lasting evidence of God's displeasure.

In common with Granada, Leon suffered from the attacks of the pirates, during their predominance in the South Sea. In 1685, a party of English freebooters, amongst them the celebrated Dampier, landed in the Estero Doña Paula, and advancing rapidly upon the city, surprised and captured it, notwithstanding the brave resistance of the little garrison of fifty men. They sacked the entire city, and burnt the cathedral, the convent of La Merced, the hospital, and many of the principal houses.

Leon is situated in the midst of the great plain of the same name, which I have described, about midway between the lake and ocean. The choice of position seems to have been determined by the same considerations which influenced the Indians in selecting it for one of their own towns, viz.: the proximity of water. Upon both sides of the city are deep ravines, in which are a multitude of springs of pure water, forming perennial streams of considerable size, which unite at the distance of half a mile from the city. From these the supply of water for the town is chiefly obtained. In later

times many wells have been sunk, but they require to be of great depth—from one hundred and twenty to two hundred feet—and the water is not esteemed to be as good as that from the ravines.

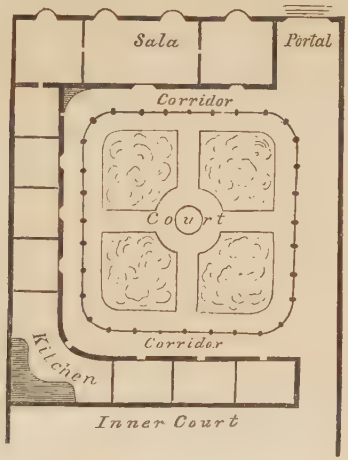
Like all other cities under the tropics, Leon covers a large area of ground. It is regularly laid out, with squares or plazas, at intervals, in each ecclesiastical or municipal district. The houses, like those of Granada, are built of adobes, and are rarely of more than one story. Each one encloses a spacious *patio* or courtyard, filled with fruit or shade trees. Sometimes the building has an inner or back court for the domestic animals, while that immediately connected with the dwelling is ornamented with shrubbery and flowers, and surrounded on all sides by a broad corridor. This style of building, which is well adapted to the climate, and rendered necessary in a country where earthquakes are so frequent, admits of very little architectural display. The builder has no opportunity of exhibiting his taste or skill, except in the "*puerta*," or "*zaguan*"—portal, or principal entrance,—and in the elaboration of the balconied windows. These portals are often high and imposing, and profusely and tastefully ornamented. Some are copies of the Moresque arches so common in Spain, and are loaded with ornaments peculiar to that style of architecture. Others are of the severer Grecian styles, and others of orders utterly indescribable, and eminently original. Above these arches the old aristocracy often placed their arms; those of a military turn carved groups of armor, and those piously inclined a prayer or a passage from the Bible.

Formerly, very few of the buildings had more than two or three openings on the street, but of late years windows are becoming more numerous. These windows are broad and high, projecting two or three feet, and are guarded by iron balconies. Within the balconies are seats, which in the evening are occupied by the señoras, who here receive their

visitors, and return the salutations of their passing friends. The gallant saunters from one to the other, and pays his devoirs without entering; an easy custom, which, in the early evening, gives the streets an air of great gayety and cheerfulness. He often carries his guitar with him, and sings a song when conversation flags. Sometimes the mounted cavalier reins in his steed before the balcony, to pay his compliments to the fair occupants,—stealthily pricking the animal with his spurs, to show off his skill in managing him, and to impress the señoras with admiration for his spirit. They are quite up to these little tricks in Nicaragua, as well as in other countries.

The interiors of the dwellings of the better classes convey an idea of great comfort, in a country where room and ventilation become necessary conditions of existence. The principal apartments, with rare exceptions, open upon the corridor, and are also connected by inner doors. In the main body of the building is the grand *sala*, or what we would call a parlor, used only for receptions, or as a sitting-room for the ladies. On either side are the private rooms of the families, while the wings are appropriated for sleeping apartments, to the servants, and for stores. Very few are ceiled, but are open to the roof, allowing a free circulation of air between the tiles. The floors are paved with large square tiles or bricks, occasionally with marble, and are usually kept well watered. And as the windows are never glazed, every passing breeze enters freely, and the ventilation is made perfect. Meals are taken in the corridor, on the side most shaded from the sun; and here hammocks are swung for those who choose to occupy them. The walls, both of the corridors and inner rooms, are sometimes painted, in imitation of marble or of hangings; but owing to the lack of skill on the part of the artists, the effect is not usually good. The accompanying ground-plan will convey an idea of the arrangement of the various parts of a Central American

dwelling, from which the details may be discovered without further explanation. I need only repeat that, however at variance with established rules of architecture in other countries, they are probably better adapted to the climate and country than edifices of a more pretending character.



PLAN OF A DWELLING-HOUSE IN LEON.

In Leon, as in Granada, the dwellings on the outskirts of the city are simple cane structures, covered with thatch, but sometimes plastered with mud and roofed with tiles. And here, as in all the other towns, they are embowered in trees, and surrounded with cactus fences. The accompanying engraving of a hut in the barrio of Saragossa, may be taken as a type of all the others.

The streets in the central part of the city are paved. The object principally had in view is the prevention of dust, which, towards the close of the dry season, is almost unendurable in the unpaved parts of the town.

Perhaps no city in America has suffered more from war than Leon. During the contest between the aristocrats and

liberals which followed the declaration of independence, a large part, embracing the richest and best built portions, was destroyed by fire. Over one thousand buildings were burned in a single night. The great cathedral is surrounded by entire squares of ruins of what were once palaces. The lofty and elaborate archways, by which they were entered, still indicate their original magnificence. Entire streets, now almost deserted, are lined with the remains of large and beautiful edifices, destroyed in the civil wars. Within their abandoned courts stand rude cane huts,—as if in mockery of their former state. Leon was formerly one of the best built cities in all Spanish America. "It is," says the old traveller, Gage, writing in 1665, "very curiously built; for the chief delight of the inhabitants consists in their houses, in the pleasure of the country adjoining, and in the abundance of all things for the life of man. They are content," he adds, "with fine gardens, with the variety of singing birds and parrots, with plenty of fish and flesh, with gay houses, and so lead a delicious, lazy, and idle life, not aspiring much to trade and traffic, although they have the lake and ocean near them. The gentlemen of Leon are almost as gay and fantastical as those of Chiapas; and it is especially from the pleasure of this city that the province of Nicaragua is called Mahomet's Paradise."[1]

The public buildings of Leon are among the finest in all

[1] The pirate, Dampier, in giving an account of the capture and burning of Leon by himself and his associates, says:

"Our countryman, Mr. Gage, who travelled in these parts, recommends Leon as the pleasantest place in all America, and calls it the Paradise of the Indies. Indeed, if we consider the advantages of its situation, we may find it surpassing most places for health and pleasure in America; for the country about it is of a sandy soil, which soon drinks up all the rain which falls. It is encompassed with savannas, so that they have the benefit of the breezes which come from any quarter; all of which makes it a very healthy place." —*Dampier's Voyage round the World*, vol. i. p. 218.

Central America. Indeed, the great cathedral of St. Peter may perhaps be regarded as second to no similar structure in any of the Spanish American States. It was finished in 1743, having occupied thirty-seven years in building. The cost is said to have been five millions of dollars, but this seems to be an exaggeration. It covers an entire square, and its front extends the whole width of the grand plaza. It is constructed of cut stone, and is one firm mass of masonry. The roof is composed of massive arches, and has all the solidity of a rock. Nothing can better illustrate its strength, than the fact that it has withstood the storms and earthquakes of more than a century ; and, with the exception of one of the towers, which during my residence in the country was struck by lightning, and cracked from top to bottom, it is now nearly as perfect as it came from the hands of its builders. Yet it has often been converted into a fortress, and has sustained more than one cannonade and bombardment from besieging forces. In 1823, it is said, no less than thirty pieces of artillery were planted on its roof. On its most exposed side, towards the east, there is hardly a square inch of its walls which is not indented with shot.

Its ornaments are of stucco, and are simple and chaste. Viewed from an eminence, the entire structure is very imposing, but seen from the plaza, it appears low in proportion to its width. The interior is not unworthy of the exterior ; but is comparatively bare of ornament. At the head of the principal aisle, beneath a lofty, spacious dome, is the great altar, composed of silver, elaborately chased. The side chapels are not remarkable for their richness or beauty. For, in the civil commotions of the country the churches have not escaped the rapacity of the soldiery. The cathedral was once possessed of extraordinary wealth, and the costliness and variety of its ornaments were a proverb in Spain itself; but now it has little to boast beyond its massive proportions and architectural design.

I visited it shortly after my arrival, under the guidance of one of the canónigos, who was conscientious in pointing out to me everything worthy of notice. What most interested me, however, was a small room, in which were contained all the portraits of the bishops, commencing with Zuniga. They were forty-four in number, and displayed every variety of feature and complexion. The dark skins and black hair of some of the bishops showed that native or Indian blood had been no bar to ecclesiastical preferment, and contrasted strongly with the fair complexions of others of European birth. Most had an expression of great austerity; types of rigorous zealots, who looked as if every sentiment and feeling of humanity had been rudely rooted from their hearts; while others wore more cheerful faces, and a few, I am sure, had been right jolly old fellows in their day, not averse to the grape, nor wholly indifferent to the smiles of beauty.

Both the façade and rear of the cathedral were once ornamented with the royal arms of Spain, but these were removed in the first fervor of republican zeal, and their places yet remain blanks,—emblematic of a country which has got rid of one government, without having as yet fully succeeded in establishing another in its place.

One of the finest views in the world is commanded from the roof of the cathedral; and standing here, I saw for the first time the waters of the Pacific, a rim of silver on the edge of the western horizon. In the east bristled the nine volcanoes of the Marabios, which I have already mentioned, their outlines sharply defined against the sky, and in their regularity of outline emulating the symmetry of the pyramids. From this position alone is a good view to be obtained of the city, which, seen from one side, or from a distance, presents only a monotonous succession of tiled roofs, half-buried amongst the trees, and only relieved by the white walls of the churches.

To the left of the cathedral, and separated only by the

CHURCH OF MERCED AND VOLCANO OF EL VIEJO.

LITH. OF SARONY & MAJOR N. Y.

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street, is the "Palacio del Obispo," the Episcopal Palace. It was described as follows, in 1751, by the then Bishop of Nicaragua, Señor Don Pedro Augustin Morel de Sta. Cruz, and has changed but little since.

"The Episcopal Palace is situated at the corner of the principal plaza, contiguous to the Sagrario; it is built of adobes and tiles, with two balconies, and is distinguished by a certain air of respectability. It is entered by a portico of good proportions, and has not less than fourteen apartments, furnished and ornamented with pictures, canopies, curtains, tables, silk beds, and many well-carved chairs. The principal sala and the oratorio are the largest; the others are proportioned to their purposes. They all open upon a broad piazza, running entirely around the court, within which is a garden, with many trees and flowers, and a fountain very beautiful and refreshing to the sight. Back of the building is another square for the servants, stables, etc. In short, nothing is wanted to make it a suitable habitation for the prelate, except a revenue sufficient to enable him to keep up a style commensurate to the edifice."

Adjoining the palace of the Bishop, is the Tridentine College of St. Ramon, established in 1675. This institution was once very flourishing, and had numerous students, with professorships of law and medicine. It has, however, shared in the general decadence of the country, and has now but little more than a nominal existence. Efforts have lately been made to revive it upon a new foundation; and with an improvement in the country at large, there is no doubt it may regain something of its former position.

The government house, which occupies the northern side of the grand plaza, is distinguished for nothing except that it is somewhat more lofty than its neighbors, and has a raised corridor extending along its entire front. Opposite to this is the Cuartel General, or head-quarters of the regular forces of the government, with a guard of soldiers constantly on duty; for, in case of disturbance, this is the first place to be attacked, inasmuch as it is the general depository of the arms of the State.

The churches of La Merced, the Recoleccion, and Calvario, are remarkable for their size and their fine façades. The front of the latter is ornamented with panels containing Scriptural groups, admirably executed in bas-relief, and with niches containing statues of the saints. It has suffered much from shot, having been twice occupied by besieging forces, while the superior position of the cathedral was in possession of the other party. The Merced has also suffered from the same cause, but in a less degree. It contains some fine paintings, and its principal altar is an elaborate and very beautiful piece of composition. A convent was once attached to this church, as also to the church of the Recoleccion, and to that of San Juan de Dios. But these have been abolished; and the convent buildings of the Merced, at the time of my arrival, were used as cavalry barracks, while those of San Juan de Dios had been converted into a hospital. Besides the churches which I have named, there are ten or twelve others, but less in size, and of more moderate pretensions. And as each of these has a chime of bells, and nearly every day is dedicated to some saint, in whose honor it is essential to ring them all, a continual clangor is kept up, which, until the stranger becomes habituated to it, or is deafened outright, is excessively annoying.

When to this list I have added the stone bridge across the ravine to the south of the city, connecting with the barrio de Guadelupe, I have finished the architectural notabilities of Leon. This bridge was never fully completed, but was boldly projected, and the arches spanning the stream are models of symmetry and good workmanship.

The Indian pueblo of Subtiaba is really part of the city of Leon, although constituting a distinct municipality. It has also its grand plaza, and separate public buildings. Its great church is second in size to no other in Nicaragua, except the cathedral of Leon. The façade is quaint, with numerous niches filled with figures of grim old saints. It is

substantially built, and has a very high antiquity. "The Parroquial of Subtiaba," said the old Bishop, Augustin Morel, writing of this church in the year 1751, "is the largest and most beautiful in the Bishopric. The principal and side chapels, and baptistery, are arched, and high and ample. The body of the church consists of three naves; the columns are of cedar, with gilt capitals. It has eight altars, four chapels, a neat sacristy, and is admirably decorated. Its towers are well proportioned, and its façade imposing and tasteful, and altogether the edifice is fit for a cathedral."

Subtiaba has suffered no less than Leon from intestine wars, and is but a shadow of what it once was, when it could muster two thousand fighting men in its plaza at a moment's warning.

It is difficult to form a correct estimate of the population of Leon. The city is spread over so wide a space, and so involved amongst trees that, even after a three months' residence, I found myself constantly discovering new and secluded portions, of the existence of which I was before ignorant. And although at first I thought twenty thousand an over estimate, I ultimately came to regard the number set down in the census attempted in 1847, viz: thirty thousand, as probably nearer the truth. In this calculation I include the Indian municipality of Subtiaba, which is generally, but erroneously supposed to be a town separate from Leon.

Here, as everywhere else in Nicaragua, the Indian and mixed population greatly predominates, and the pure whites constitute scarcely one-tenth of the whole number. The general complexion is however considerably lighter than at Granada, but not so clear as at Managua and some of the smaller towns. An infusion of Indian blood is easily to be detected in a large proportion of those who claim to be of pure Spanish descent. It displays itself less in the color of the skin than in a certain quickness of the eye, which is a much more expressive feature in those crossed with the

Indians than in either of the original stocks. In respect of *physique*, leaving color out of the question, there are probably no handsomer men in the world than some of the Sambos, or offspring of Indian and negro parents. They are of course darker than the Indian, but taller and better developed. It should however be observed that the negroes of Nicaragua differ very widely in appearance from those of the United States. They must have been derived from an entirely different portion of the African continent. They have, in general, aquiline noses, small mouths, and thin lips,—in fact, with the exception of the crisp hair and dark skin, they have few of the features which, with us, are regarded as peculiar and universal in the negro race.

The fusion between all portions of the population of Nicaragua has been so complete, that notwithstanding the diversity of races, distinctions of caste are hardly recognized. The whites, in their social intercourse, maintain a certain degree of exclusion, but in all other relations the completest equality prevails. This would not probably be the case if the white population was proportionably greater, and possessed the physical power to keep up the distinctions which naturally separate the superior and inferior families of men. With a full consciousness of their numerical inferiority, their policy is plainly that of concession; and however repugnant it may have been originally to their pride, it has now come to be regarded as a matter of course, and is submitted to with a good grace.

A few days in Leon sufficed to show me that, in the tone of its society, and the manners of its people, it had more of the metropolitan character than Granada. And although the proportion of its inhabitants who laid claim to what is called "position," was even here comparatively small, and not at all rigid in its adherence to the conventionalities of the larger cities of Mexico, South America, and our own country; yet, in the essential respects of hospitality, kind-

ness, and courtesy, I found it entitled to a position second to no other community. The women are far from being highly educated, but are simple and unaffected in their manners, and possessed of great quickness of apprehension, and a readiness in good-natured repartee, which compensates, to a certain extent, for their deficiency in general information.

The condition of the country for many years has been such as to afford few opportunities for the cultivation of those accomplishments which are indispensable accessories of refined society; and we are therefore, not justified in subjecting the people of Leon, or of any other city of Central America, to the test of our standards. I can conceive of nothing more painful, or more calculated to awaken the interest of the visitor from abroad, than the spectacle of a people, with really high aspirations and capabilities, borne down by the force of opposing circumstances, conscious of its own condition, but almost despairing of improving it.

In dress the women of Leon have the same fashions with those of Granada, but the European styles are less common, owing to the circumstance that there are fewer foreign residents to infect the popular taste. They have an equal fondness for the cigarito; and in the street are not less proud of displaying a little foot and a satin slipper. As everywhere else in the world they are very attentive in their devotions, but beyond their daily visit to the churches, rarely go out of doors, except it is in the early evening, when visits are paid informally. If chance brings together a sufficient number, a "*tertulia*," or dance, is often improvised. Set parties or balls are of rare occurrence, and are generally given only on public occasions, and then with great state and ceremony.

We were witnesses of a tertulia at our own house, the second evening after our arrival. A dozen señoras casually found themselves together, a dance was proposed by the gallants loitering at the balconies, and the proposition meeting with favor, they at once dispersed to bring in recruits and

the "musicos." In an hour the grand sala was filled. The females as they came in were all ranged on one side of the room, and the males on the other. This looked rather stiff, and I began to fear that a *tertulia* was no great matter after all. Directly, however, a single couple took the floor; the music struck up, and as they moved down the room, the measure brought the lady first on one side, and then on the other. As she passed she alternately tapped a señor and señora on the shoulder with her fan, thus arbitrarily determining the partners, who were obliged at once to join in the dance. In this manner the whole party was brought to its feet, *nolens volens*,—and such I found was a frequent mode of opening the tertulia. After the first set is over, the ice once broken, and the excitement up, the gallants are permitted to exercise a choice. I thought the practice a good one, obviating a great deal of awkward diplomacy at the outset, and putting every one very speedily at their ease. As the evening progressed the party augmented, and before ten o'clock we had got together the *élite* of Leon. All joined heartily in the spirit of the affair, and when the bell of the cathedral tolled eleven, I think I never saw a more animated assemblage. The polka and the waltz, as also the bolero, and other well known Spanish dances, were all danced gracefully and with spirit; and besides these, after much persuasion, we had an Indian dance, a singular affair, slow and complicated, and which left upon my mind a distinct impression that it was religious in its origin. After the dancing, we had music, but beyond the national air, which was given with force and spirit, I cannot say much for the singing.

During the whole evening, the windows were festooned with urchins, and the doors blockaded by spectators, who when they were particularly pleased, applauded tumultuously, as if the whole affair had been got up for their special entertainment. The police would have driven them off, but I won an enduring popularity by interceding in their behalf,

and they were consequently permitted to remain. Upon the occasions of the more formal balls subsequently given, soldiers were stationed at every entrance, and the crowd kept at a distance.

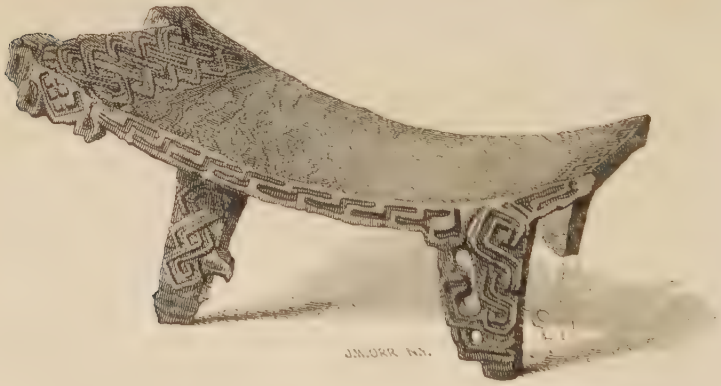
Amongst the lower classes, fandangoes and other characteristic dances are frequent, and are sufficiently uproarious and promiscuous. For obvious reasons, I never witnessed any of these in the city, although I stumbled upon them occasionally in the villages, during my excursions in the country.

The people of Nicaragua are generally scrupulously clean in their persons, except when travelling or ill, and then the touch of water is prohibited. But beyond the grand sala, and the apartments appropriated to visitors, their houses are frequently very far from being patterns of neatness. I have seen sleeping apartments, occupied by families of the first respectability, which certainly had not been swept for weeks, not to say months. Yet the beds in these rooms were clean and neat—the more so perhaps from the contrast. These remarks are less applicable to Granada than Leon, for in the former city the example of the foreign residents has worked a partial reformation amongst the native housekeepers.

The Spanish people, in all parts of the world, are temperate in their habits. Those of Nicaragua in this respect do no discredit to their progenitors. Strong liquors are little used except amongst the lower orders of the population; and even here excess is less common than with us. The sale of brandy and the "aguardiente," or native rum, is a government monopoly, and is confined to the "estancos," or licensed establishments, where it pays a high duty to the State. I do not remember to have seen a single respectable citizen drunk during the whole of my residence in the country. Yet a bottle of "cogniac" is usually offered to the stranger, whenever he pays a visit. A considerable quantity of sweet or Spanish wines, are used in the principal towns, but the

lighter French wines have the largest consumption. There is a delicious kind of *liqueur* made from the Muscatel grape, called "Italia," or "Pisco," which is brought from Peru. It is, however, produced in small quantities, upon I believe a single estate, and is consequently introduced in Nicaragua to a very limited extent. Should it ever become generally known to the people of the United States, it would, no doubt, create for itself a large demand. But whether it can be produced in sufficient quantities to supply a considerable market, is a point upon which I am ignorant.

In their food, the Nicaraguans are also exceedingly simple. Tortillas and frijoles are the standard dishes. The first are composed of maize, and if well made are really palatable.

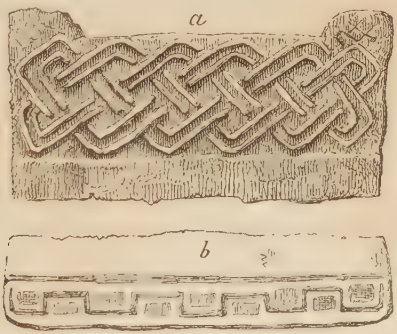


ANCIENT METLATL, OR GRINDING STONE.

Fresh and unblemished maize on the ear is always selected. It is shelled, soaked in alkali to remove the hull, and then carefully and repeatedly washed in cold water. It is afterwards placed on a *metlatl*, or grinding stone, and reduced to the extremest fineness. A very little cheese is ground with it, to give it consistency. A roll is then taken in the hands, beaten into a flat cake, and placed on an earthen pan, already heated upon the fire. When sufficiently done upon one side,

it is adroitly turned on the other, and is finally served hot and crisp at the table. I "cottoned" to the tortilla from the start, and always preferred it to the native bread, which although light and fair to the eye, is invariably spoiled by sweetening. The tortilla is an aboriginal invention; and the foregoing engraving represents an ancient *metlatl* or grinding stone which was dug up during my residence in Leon. The form is unchanged to this day, although few are as elaborately ornamented as that here introduced, which is a favorable specimen of aboriginal carving.

It will be observed that this stone is curiously ornamented with *grecques*, which are shown more distinctly in the subjoined enlarged sketches of the upper and lower extremities of the *metlatl* (*a. b.*)



ORNAMENTS OF THE METLATL.

Frijoles, in plain English, are baked beans; but the beans are quite of a different flavor from those in use in more northern latitudes. They are small, white, black, or brown in color, and indigenous in the country. They are not usually relished at first, but a taste for them is gradually acquired, and a meal without *frijoles* finally comes to lack an essential ingredient. The man who cannot "go" the *frijoles* had better keep away from Central America. For the weary traveller, in soliciting the bill of fare at the Indian hut where, four

times out of five, he is obliged to stop for the night, has generally this brief catalogue, "*hay tortillas, frijoles, frijolitos, frijolitos fritos, y huevos*,"—"tortillas, beans, little beans, little baked beans, and eggs!"

Excellent beef and pork are to be obtained, at cheap rates, in all the principal towns, and poultry is abundant. A pair of chickens costs from a *quartillo* to a *medio*,—i. e. from three to six cents. Next to the tortillas and frijoles, however, the chief articles of consumption are rice, plantains, and a kind of cheese, which is supplied in great quantities from the "haciendas de las vacas," or cattle estates. The plantains are cooked in many ways,—boiled, fried, and roasted,—and are singly capable of sustaining life. And when I add that, in many parts of the state, they may be had for the asking, and that everywhere six cents worth will sustain a small family for a week, it will be understood that the incentives to labor cannot be very strong, and that the poorest wretch need not go hungry.

The markets of Leon display the greatest profusion of fruits and vegetables, of which it would be almost impossible to give a complete list. Water and musk melons, papayas, pine apples, oranges, mamays, nisperos, pomegranates, marañons, jocotes, yucas, plantains, bananas, beans, maize, and occasionally small potatoes but little larger than bullets, brought in bales from the highlands of Costa Rica and Honduras, and sold by the pound. And as the smallest coin in the country is a *quartillo*, or three cents, which would purchase more of almost any of these articles than most families would require at one time, change is made in the aboriginal coin of the country, namely *cacao nuts*, of which four are about equivalent in value to one cent of our currency.

But two meals a-day are eaten by the inhabitants at large. A cup of coffee or chocolate is served at the bedside, or immediately upon rising in the morning. Breakfast follows at nine or ten o'clock in the forenoon, and dinner at three or

four in the afternoon. Tea is only drunk by foreigners, and by them to a very limited extent. It is not to be found therefore in any of the shops. A cup of chocolate, or more frequently a cup of *tiste* (parched corn ground with chocolate and sugar and mixed with water), passed unceremoniously in the evening, supplies its place, and is not an unacceptable substitute. It should be mentioned, however, that large quantities of "dulces," literally "sweets" or sweetmeats are eaten between meals, especially by the women. The Spanish taste for "dulces" long ago passed into a proverb, but it rather surpasses itself in Nicaragua. The venders of "dulces," generally bright Indian girls, gaily dressed, and bearing a tray, covered with the purest white napkins, and temptingly spread, upon their heads, pass daily from house to house; and it is sometimes difficult, and always ungallant to refuse purchasing something, however trifling, from their stock. The "mil gracias Señor!" in the silverest of voices, is always worth the money, and so one gets the "dulces" gratis. They sometimes, however, trespassed a little upon my good nature, and carried off more of my loose change than was proper, considering that, having a reasonable regard for my stomach, I never ate any of their dyspeptic compounds.

Leon has little trade beyond the supply of its local wants. The principal import and export business for this portion of the state is done in the large and flourishing town of Chinandega, situated within two leagues of the port of Realejo. Its shops are nevertheless well supplied, and it has some wealthy merchants. Its principal inhabitants, however, are "propietarios," owners of large estates which are carried on through agents. Attempts have recently been made to augment the commercial importance of Leon by opening a shorter and direct communication with Realejo; but its interior position will always prove a bar to its progress in this respect. Chinandega has already a start, which it will doubtless keep,

unless a town, more favorably situated nearer the port, should spring up under the requirements of commerce.

Since the above was written, a new town called "Corinth," has been laid out on the south shore of the harbor of Realejo, in the direction of Leon, which will greatly benefit the latter city.

MACHETE AND TOLEDO.

CHAPTER X.

THE VICINITY OF LEON—THE BISHOP'S BATHS—FUENTE DE AXUSCO—"CERRO DE LOS AMERICANOS"—A MILITARY BALL AND CIVIC DINNER—GEN. GUERRERO—OFFICIAL VISIT FROM THE INDIAN MUNICIPALITY OF SUBTIABA—SIMON ROQUE—A SECRET—ADDRESS AND REPLY—VISIT RETURNED—THE CABILDO—AN EMPTY TREASURY—"SUBTIABA, LEAL Y FIEL"—ROYAL CEDULAS—FORMING A VOCABULARY—"UNA DECIMA"—THE INDIANS OF NICARAGUA; STATURE; COMPLEXION; DISPOSITION; BRAVERY; INDUSTRY; SKILL IN THE ARTS—MANUFACTURE OF COTTON—PRIMITIVE MODE OF SPINNING—TYRIAN PURPLE—PETATES AND HAMMOCKS—POTTERY—"AGUACALES," AND "JICARAS,"—COSTUME—ORNAMENTS—ABORIGINAL INSTITUTIONS—THE CONQUEST OF NICARAGUA—ENORMITIES PRACTISED TOWARDS THE INDIANS—PRESENT CONDITION OF THE INDIANS—THE SEQUEL OF SOMOZA'S INSURRECTION—BATTLES OF THE OBRAJE AND SAN JORGE—CAPTURE AND EXECUTION OF SOMOZA—MODERATE POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT—RETURN OF GEN. MUNOZ—MEDALS—FESTIVAL OF PEACE—NOVEL PROCESSION—A BLACK SAINT.

THE country adjacent to Leon is very fine, and the "paseos" or rides in the vicinity, although lacking an important element of beauty, the proximity of water, are not without variety and interest. My first expedition on horseback was to a place called the Bishop's Baths. We rode through the barrio de San Juan, where the *carreteros* most do congregate, to the edge of the northern ravine. Here we found a path literally shut in with cactuses and trees covered with vines, which led to the ruins of an ancient gateway, beyond which had once been the suburban seat of the Bishops of Nicaragua. It was a beautiful spot; the ground had been artificially smoothed, and beneath the large trees which shadowed over it, were the remains of stone seats, and of pedestals which had once sustained crosses and the statues of the saints. In

front of where the house had stood, before its destruction during the troubles of the revolutionary period, there was an abrupt slope to the stream at the bottom of the ravine. This slope had formerly been terraced, and descended by a winding way. The baths were of stone, and although now in ruins, still gave evidences of the taste and luxury which had led to their construction. A couple of women, naked with the exception of a single cloth around their loins, were washing in the principal bath, but they vacated it temporarily at our request, and we took possession. The seclusion of the place, the limpid purity of the water, and the deep shade in which everything was shrouded, enchanted me with the spot, and I could not help thinking that it must have been selected by one of the rosiest and jolliest of the old bishops whose portraits had tipped me a friendly wink from the walls of the heavy room where they were imprisoned in the cathedral. But I afterwards found that this was but one only of a thousand equally beautiful spots in the neighborhood of the city. That, however, to which my memory reverts most frequently, is the "fuente de Axusco," distant about two miles to the southward of the town. It is a broad pool, at the bottom of a ravine, shut in by steep banks on every side, and reached by a single narrow path. The water is tepid, and bursts, pure as crystal, in a large volume from beneath the rocks. It is literally arched over with trees, and curtained in with vines. This place was my favorite resort during the whole of my residence in the country. I rose at early dawn, despatched a cup of coffee, and mounting my horse, generally reached the place just as the sun began to tinge the summit of the distant volcanoes. The path lay through fields covered with trees and bushes, spangled all over with flowers, and glittering with dew-drops. The cool, bracing morning air, the quick action of the horse, and the grateful plunge into the quiet pool,—I think I never enjoyed so much the mere pleasure of existence, as during my visits

to the "fuente de Axusco." There stood a cross in a nook near the pool, and I often observed chaplets of fresh flowers suspended upon it. It puzzled me exceedingly, and one day, finding a little boy seated beside it, I asked him why it was there? It commemorated an awful murder, he said, and that was all he knew, except that the victim was a woman. Beyond the "fuenta," is the range of low hills which I have mentioned as bordering the plain of Leon on the side of the ocean. I had the trees cut down on the most commanding peak, and rode there so frequently that the rancheros in the vicinity christened it "el cerro de los Americanos," the hill of the Americans. From this point the eye traversed the whole vast plain, and took in every object of interest. Upon one hand the forests alone shut the lake of Managua from view, while upon the other the broad Pacific lay bright and beautiful on the edge of the horizon. With a glass the vessels in the harbor of Realejo, and the outlines of the volcano of Coseguina, distant more than a hundred miles, could easily be distinguished. A view from the "cerro de los Americanos" is an incident in a man's lifetime not likely to be forgotten. Its impression upon my own mind is too distinct ever to be effaced.

Our second week in Leon was signalized by a military ball and a government dinner, both on a scale far surpassing anything of the kind which had been witnessed in the city for many years. The ball was under the special patronage of Gen. Don Jose Guerrero, who had just finished a term as Director of the State, but who had accepted the command of the garrison in the absence of the General-in-chief. It was during his administration that the seizure of San Juan by the English had taken place, and it was his eloquent appeal, in a circular addressed to all civilized nations, which had arrested the attention and awakened the sympathy of General Taylor and his cabinet. My arrival in the country, it can readily be understood, was to him a source of the pro-

foundest satisfaction; and during my official residence in Leon, I had no warmer friend than General Guerrero. May he live to witness the fruition of the policy which he marked out for his country, and the realization of those high and patriotic hopes which he has so long and so devotedly cherished!

Amongst the most pleasing incidents connected with my arrival was a formal visit from the municipal authorities of the Indian pueblo of Subtiaba, who, in their way, are amongst the sturdiest republicans in all Nicaragua. At their head was Simon Roque, with whom I afterwards established an intimate friendship. He presented me an address, written both in the Indian language and in Spanish, and accompanied it with a speech, which was far above the average, both in language and sentiment, and altogether a favorable specimen of Indian eloquence. Simon and his companions were dressed in spotless white, and each wore a red sash about his waist, and carried a gold-headed cane, an insignia of office, in his hands. They were curious to know about the Indian population of the United States, and I blush to say it, I was ashamed to tell them the truth. They had heard that I was a great friend of the Indians, and on the lookout for "piedras antiguas." They had something to tell me on that subject, but it could only be done when we were alone. So the sala was cleared, and Simon, after some circumlocution, informed me that they knew of certain ancient stones which their ancestors had buried a very long time ago, and which, if I wished, they would present to me, on the peremptory condition, however, that their locality should be kept a profound secret. I was too glad to have an opportunity to assent to any conditions, and it was finally agreed that, as it would be impossible for me to attend to the business now, some of the stones should be excavated at once, and sent to my residence. They were as good as their word; and a couple of mornings thereafter we were surprised at finding two statues at the

threshold of the portal; and a few nights later a cart appeared with two more,—of all which a description will be given in another place. This little piece of confidence over, I treated the company to as much claret as they chose to drink, and we parted with the understanding that I should return the visit at an early day. The address and reply were as follows:

ADDRESS.

"Sir:—The municipality of the Pueblo of Subtiaba, of which we are members, entertain the highest enthusiasm in view of the relations which your arrival induces us to believe will speedily be established between Nicaragua and the United States, the greatest and most glorious republic beneath the sun. We rejoice in the depths of our hearts that a man like yourself has been chosen to convey to us the assurances of future prosperity, in the name of the sons of Washington; and we trust in the Almighty, that the flag of the United States may soon become the shield of Nicaragua on land and sea. Convey our sincerest thanks for their sympathy to the great people which you represent, and give to your generous government the assurances of that deep gratitude which we feel but cannot express. We beg of you, Sir, to accept this humble evidence of the cordial sentiments which we entertain both for you, your countrymen, and your Government, and which are equally shared by the people which we represent.

(Signed) Jose de la Cruz Garcias,
Simon Roque,
Francisco Luis Antan.

REPLY.

"My friends of the Municipality of Subtiaba:

"I experience great pleasure in receiving from your hands this brief but earnest address; and I return you my thanks, both personally and in behalf of my Government, for the friendly sentiments which it contains. I sincerely hope that the high anticipations which you have formed from a more intimate relation between your country and the United States, may be fully realized."

The reader may be assured that I did not forget my promise to the municipality of Subtiaba. A day was shortly after-

wards fixed for my visit, and I was received with great ceremony at the cabildo, or council chamber, where I found collected all the old men who could assist me in forming a vocabulary of the ancient language, which I had casually expressed a desire to procure. It was with difficulty that we could effect an entrance, for a half-holiday had been given to the boys of all the schools in honor of the occasion, and they literally swarmed around the building. We were finally ushered into an inner room, where the archives of the municipality were preserved. Upon one side was a large chest of heavy wood, with massive locks, which had anciently been

LA PARROQUIAL DE SUBTIABA.

the strong box or treasury. A shadow fell over Simon's face as he pointed it out to me, and said that he could remember the time when it was filled with "duros," hard dollars, and when, at a single stroke of the alarm bell, two thousand armed men could be gathered in the plaza of Subtiaba. But those days were passed, and the municipality now scarcely retained a shadow of its former greatness. Under the crown it had earned the title "leal y fiel," loyal

and true: and in reward of its fidelity it had received a grant of all the lands intervening between it and the ocean, to hold in perpetuity for the benefit of its citizens. And Simon showed me the royal letters, signed "Yo, el Rey" (I, the King), which the emperors of Spain had thought it not derogatory to their dignity to address to his predecessors in office: and notwithstanding his ardent republicanism, I thought Simon looked at them with something of regret. I inquired for manuscripts which might throw some light upon the early history of the country, but found only musty records, of no interest or value.

My attempts to fill out the blank vocabulary with which I was provided created a great deal of merriment. I enjoyed it quite as much as any of them, for nothing could be more amusing than the discussions between the old men in respect to certain doubtful words and phrases. They sometimes quite forgot my presence, and rated each other soundly as ignoramuses; whereat Simon was greatly scandalized, and threatened to put them all in the stocks as "hombres sin verguenza," men destitute of shame. "Ah!" said he, "these old sinners give me more trouble than the young ones"—a remark which created great mirth amongst the outsiders, and especially amongst the young vagabonds who clung like monkeys to the window bars. The group of swarthy, earnest faces gathered round the little table, upon which was heaped a confused mass of ancient, time-stained papers, would have furnished a study for a painter. It was quite dark when I had concluded my inquiries, but I was not permitted to leave without listening to a little poem, "Una Decima," written by one of the schoolmasters, who read it to me by the light of a huge wax candle, borrowed, I am sure, from the church for the occasion. My modesty forbids my attempting a translation, and so I compromise matters by submitting the original:

DECIMA.

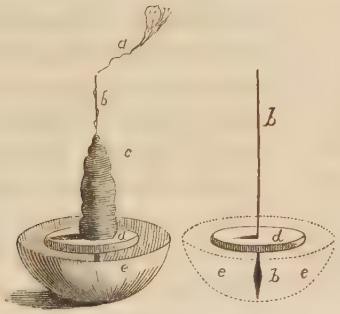
Nicaragua, ve hasta cuando
Cesara vuestro desvelo,
Ya levantara el vuelo
Hermoso, alegre, y triunfante;
Al mismo tiempo mirando
De este personage el porte,
Y mas sera cuando corte
Todos los agradecimientos:
Diremos todos contentos
Viva el Gobierno del Norte! D. S.

As I mounted my horse, Don Simon led off with three cheers for "El Ministro del Norte," and followed it with three more for "El Amigo de los Indios" (the friend of the Indians), all of which was afterwards paraded by a dingy little Anglo-servile paper published in Costa Rica, as evidence that I was tampering with the Indians, and exciting them to undertake the utter destruction of the white population!

The Indians of Nicaragua, who, as I have said, predominate in the country, are singularly docile and industrious, and constitute what would, in some countries, be called an excellent "rural population." They are a smaller race of men than the Indians of the United States, but have fine muscular developments, and a singularly mild and soft expression of countenance. In color also they are lighter, and their features less strongly marked. Some of the women are exceedingly pretty, and when young, have figures beautifully and classically moulded. They are entirely unobtrusive in their manners, seldom speaking unless first addressed, and are always kind and hospitable to strangers. They are not warlike but brave, and when reduced to the necessity, fight with the most desperate obstinacy. Leon has more than once owed its safety to the Indian battalion of Subtiaba, which, in

the civil wars of 1838–39, marched triumphantly from one end of Central America to the other.

The agriculture of the State is almost entirely carried on by them; but they are not deficient in mechanical skill, and with the rudest tools often produce the most delicate and elaborate articles of workmanship. The women manufacture a large quantity of cotton for their own consumption and for sale. And in riding through Subtiaba in the afternoon, no spectacle is more common than to see a woman naked to the waist, sitting in the doorway of almost every hut, or beneath the shadow of an adjacent tree, busily engaged in spinning



PRIMITIVE SPINNING APPARATUS.

cotton. A little foot-wheel, such as was formerly in use for spinning flax in our own country, is here commonly used for this purpose. But the aboriginal contrivance is not yet wholly displaced. It is exceedingly simple, consisting of a thin spindle of wood fifteen or sixteen inches in length, which is passed through a fly, or wheel of hard, heavy wood, six inches in diameter, resembling the wheel of a pulley, except that it is convex instead of concave on the edge. The spindle thus resembles a gigantic top. When used it is placed in a calabash, or hollowed piece of wood, to prevent it from toppling over, when not in motion. A thread is attached to it, just above the fly, and it is then twirled rap-

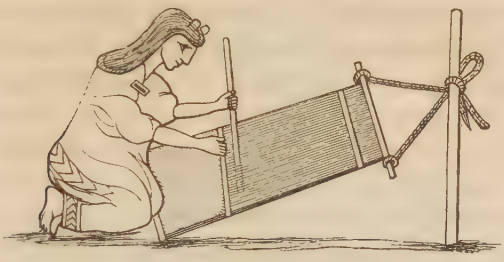
idly between the thumb and fore-finger. The momentum of the fly keeps it in motion for half a minute, and meantime the thread is drawn out by the hands of the operator, from the pile of prepared cotton which she holds in her lap. It is then wound on the spindle, and the process repeated, until the spindle is full of thread.

In the foregoing cut *a* represents the cotton; *b*, *b*, the spindle; *d*, the fly; *c*, the thread already spun and wound: and *e*, *e*, the outlines of the calabash. A precisely similar mode of spinning was practised by the ancient Mexicans, who, however, inserted the lower end of the spindle in a hole made in a block of wood, as shown in the accompanying engraving. The mode of weaving amongst the Indians of Nicaragua was anciently the same as that of the Mexicans, which is sufficiently well illustrated in the following engraving, copied from the Codex Mendoza, a Mexican manuscript or painting.

SPINNING, FROM A MEXICAN MANUSCRIPT.

Some of the cotton fabrics manufactured by the Indians are very durable, and woven in tasteful figures of various colors. The color most valued is the Tyrian purple, obtained from the murex shell-fish, which is found upon the Pacific coast of Nicaragua. This color is produced of any desirable depth and tone, and is permanent; unaffected alike by exposure to the sun and to the action of alkalies. The process of dying the thread illustrates the patient assiduity of the Indians. It is taken to the seaside, when a sufficient number of shells are collected, which being dried from the sea water, the work is commenced. Each shell is taken up singly, and a slight pressure upon the valve which closes its mouth forces out a few drops of the coloring fluid, which is then almost destitute of color. In this each thread is dipped singly, and after ab-

sorbing enough of the precious liquid, is carefully drawn out between the thumb and finger, and laid aside to dry. Whole days and nights are spent in this tedious process, until the work is completed. At first the thread is of a dull blue



PRIMITIVE WEAVING; FROM A MEXICAN MANUSCRIPT.

color, but upon exposure to the atmosphere acquires the desired tint. The fish is not destroyed by the operation, but is returned to the sea, when it lays in a new stock of coloring matter for a future occasion.[1]

The manufacture of "petates," or variegated mats, from the bark of the palm, and hammocks from the "pita," a species of agave, is exclusively in Indian hands. They are also skillful in the manufacture of pottery, which has remained unchanged from the period before the Conquest. The

[1] "The cotton-yarn thus dyed is known in the country by the name of '*hilo morado*,' and is highly prized by the Indian women of all the States, who are extremely partial to it for adorning the dresses used on festive occasions. Formerly, high prices were paid for it; being frequently sold in Guatemala and other principal towns, for from ten to fourteen dollars the pound. In recent times purple thread has been imported from Europe, and sold at a much cheaper rate; but the color is neither as good nor as durable, and notwithstanding its economy, does not supplant the native product. The Indians are not easily deceived by offering them the one for the other, as they can readily distinguish the foreign from the genuine by some peculiarity of smell in the latter, which, although the dearest, is always preferred."—*Baily*, p. 125.

"cantaros," water-jars, and other vessels in common use, amongst all classes, are made by them. They are formed by hand, without the aid of the potter's wheel, and are variously and often elaborately colored and ornamented, baked, and when intended for purposes requiring it, are partially glazed. The water-jars, however, are porous, so as to admit of enough water passing through to keep the outer surface covered with moisture, the evaporation of which rapidly and effectually cools the contents of the vessel. Oviedo commends highly the skill which the ancient inhabitants displayed in the manufacture of their pottery, and which is very well sustained both by the fragments which are found, and by the wares which the Indians still manufacture. "They make basins, plates, jars, and pitchers, of very fine pottery, black and smooth as velvet, and brilliant as jet. I have brought some specimens, which are so fine that they might be offered to a prince." Thus saith the chronicler.

Mr. W. H. Edwards, in his narrative of "A Voyage up the Amazon," p. 114, describes the preparation and painting of pottery by the Indians on that river. The brushes or pencils were the small species of palms, and the coloring matter the simplest kinds. The blue was indigo; black, the juice of the mandioca; green, the juice of some other plant; and the red and yellow, clays. The colors were applied in squares and circles, or if anything imitative was intended, in the rudest outlines. The *glazing* was produced by a resinous gum found in the forests, which was gently rubbed over the vessels, previously warmed over a bed of coals. This description applies equally to the modes practised in Nicaragua.

They also make drinking vessels from the calabash; the largest varieties are called "*guacals*," or "*aguacals*," and the smaller ones, made from the long or pear-shaped calabash, "*jicaras*." These last are often tastefully carved upon their exteriors, and are generally used instead of tumblers. It is indispensable that "*tiste*" should be served in "jicaras," and

amongst the people at large they are also used for coffee and chocolate. But as their bottoms are round, little carved stands are made to receive them. The Indians near the city of Nicaragua make similar cups from a variety of cocoa-nut peculiar to that vicinity, which are celebrated throughout their country for their beauty of shape and ornament. They are black, and highly polished, and when mounted with silver, are greatly prized by foreigners.

JICARA. GUACAL. CANTARO. TINAJA.

The dress of the Indians is exceedingly simple. On ordinary occasions, the women wear only a white or flowered skirt, fastened around the waist, leaving the upper part of the person entirely exposed, or but partially covered by a handkerchief fastened around the neck. In Masaya and some other places, a square piece of cloth, of native manufacture, and of precisely the same style and pattern with that used for the same purpose before the Discovery, supplies the place of the skirt. It is fastened in some incomprehensible way, without the aid of strings or pins, and falls from the hips a little below the knees. The guipil and nagua are however adopted in nearly all the large towns, and are everywhere worn on festival days and Sundays. The men wear a kind of cotton drawers, fastened above the hips, but frequently reaching no lower than the knees. Sandals supply the place of shoes, but for the most part both sexes go

with their feet bare. The taste for ornament is universal; and a rosary, to which is attached a little golden, silver, or ebony cross, is suspended from the necks of male and female, old and young. They are also fond of flowers, and the girls are seldom without some of them entwined amongst the luxuriant locks of their long, black hair, or braided in a chaplet and encircling their foreheads.

AN INDIAN GIRL OF SUBTIABA IN HOLIDAY COSTUME.

The municipality of Subtiaba, in common with the barrios of some of the towns, holds lands, as I have said, in virtue of royal grants, in its corporate capacity. These lands are inalienable, and are leased to the inhabitants at low and almost nominal rates. Every citizen is entitled to a sufficient quantity to enable him to support himself and his family; for which he pays from four rials (half a dollar,) to two dollars a year. This practice seems to have been of aboriginal institution; for under the ancient Indian organization, the *right to live* was recognized as a fundamental principle in the civil and social system. No man was supposed to be

entitled to more land than was necessary to his support; nor was he permitted to hold more than that, to the exclusion or injury of others.

In fact, many of the institutions of the Indians in this country were recognized, and have been perpetuated by the Spaniards. Some of the ceremonies of the aboriginal ritual have also been incorporated amongst the rites of the Catholic Church. In many respects it is hard to say whether the conquerors have assimilated most to the Indians, or the Indians to the Spaniards. For, however rude and subverting the first shock of Spanish conquest in America, the subsequent policy of Spain, framed and directed by the famous Council of the Indies, was that of conciliation. In common with the church, it conceded much to the habits and feelings of the aborigines, and to a certain extent conformed to them.

The conquest of Nicaragua was effected with no less violence than that of Mexico and Peru; and if we may credit the account of Las Casas, the pious bishop of Chiapa, who visited the country in person, it was both attended and followed by extraordinary cruelties. He charges the enormity chiefly upon Pedro Arias de Avila, Governor of Darien, who sent Cordova to subdue the country, and who himself afterwards became its governor.

"The Indians of this province," he says, "were naturally of a mild and peacable temper; yet notwithstanding this, the Governor, or rather Tyrant, with the ministers of his cruelty, treated them in the same manner as they did those of the other kingdoms. They committed murders and robberies, more than it is possible for pen to relate. Upon the slightest pretexts, the soldiers massacred the inhabitants without regard to age, sex, or condition. They exacted from them certain measures of corn, and certain numbers of slaves, and if these were not rendered, hesitated not to kill the delinquents. And the country being plain, the people were

unable to escape to the mountains as they did elsewhere, and were consequently at the mercy of the Spanish horse. They carried off many thousands as slaves, slaying those who fainted or wearied on the march.

"The Governor once arbitrarily changed the distribution of the Indians, conveying most of them to his favorites, to the exclusion of those with whom he was displeased. The result of this was a great scarcity of food; and the Spaniards seizing upon the provisions of the Indians, caused a great distress, and induced a disorder which destroyed upwards of thirty thousand of the people.

"All the cities, and fields around them, were like pleasant gardens, which the Spaniards cultivated according to the share which each one had assigned him by lot; and to save their own revenues, supported themselves from the stores of the Indians, thus consuming, in a short time, what these poor people had got together with great care and toil. Nobles, women, and children were all compelled to work day and and night; many died under the burthens which were imposed upon them. For they obliged them to carry on their shoulders to the ports, which were in some cases distant thirty leagues, the plank and timbers used in building vessels."

Las Casas, however, regards the practice of exacting slaves from the caziques, for transportation and sale elsewhere, as one of the chief causes of the depopulation of the country. Five or six ship-loads were annually taken to Peru and Panama, and sold there. He calculates that half a million of Indians were thus drawn out of Nicaragua alone; but this number appears incredible. The statement that from fifty to sixty thousand perished in the wars of the Conquest is perhaps, nearer the truth; for, as he observes, "this was one of the best peopled countries in all America."

When the Council of the Indies began to repress the cruelties of the conquerors, the governors of Nicaragua proved themselves refractory; indeed, Rodrigo de Contreras openly

disobeyed his instructions in this respect, which was the proximate cause of the insurrection headed by his son, to which I have elsewhere alluded.

The following incident, related by Oviedo, will illustrate the severe and repulsive measures which were practised towards the Indians at this early period. "In 1528, the treasurer, Alonzo de Peralta, and a man named Zurita, and the brothers Ballas, left the city of Leon, each to visit the villages and Indians belonging to him. They never returned, having been destroyed by their own vassals. Hereupon Pedro Arias de Avila sent out soldiers to bring in some of the malefactors. They arrested seventeen or eighteen *caziques* whom Pedro Arias caused to be strangled by dogs. The execution took place in the following manner, on Tuesday, the 16th of June of the same year, in the public square of Leon. Each cazique was armed with a stick, and told to defend himself against the dogs, and to kill them if he could. Five or six young dogs were first set upon them, which their masters wished to train, as they were yet without experience. They ran baying around the Indian, who easily kept them off with his stick; but the moment he thought himself conqueror, a couple of mastiffs, or well-trained hounds, were sent against him, who threw him in a moment. The other dogs then fell upon him, biting and choking him, tearing out his entrails, and devouring him, as it were. In this manner the eighteen were soon disposed of. They were from the valley of Olocoton, and its vicinity. When the dogs were satiated, the dead bodies remained in the same place, it being forbidden to carry them off, under penalty of being served in like manner; otherwise the Indians would have taken them away. They were thus left in order to frighten the natives; but on the second day the stench of the dead bodies became insupportable. And on the fourth, it was so horrible that, being compelled to pass there in going to the house of the governor, I begged him to give permission to have them carried away:

which he did the more readily, since his house was situated near the square."

But whatever their former condition, the Indians of Nicaragua no longer labor under any disabilities. They enjoy equal privileges with the whites, and may aspire to any position, however high, both in the Church and State. The system of *peonage* (slavery under a less repugnant name) is here unknown. Yet the Indian retains his traditionary deference for the white man, and tacitly admits his superiority. In some of the States of Central America, a jealousy of caste has been artfully excited by unscrupulous partisans, for unworthy purposes, which has led to most deplorable results; but in Nicaragua, if this feeling exists at all, it is only in a latent form. At any rate, it has never displayed itself in any of those frightful demonstrations which have almost desolated Guatemala and portions of Peru, and which threaten the entire extinction of the white race in Yucatan. This quiet, however, may be that of the slumbering volcano; and its continuance may depend very much upon the judicious encouragement of white emigration from the United States and from Europe.

The original inhabitants of Nicaragua, and of Central America generally, seem to have been of the true Toltecan stock. So too were the nations of Anahuac, the Aztecs or Mexicans, but modified and deteriorated by association and intermixture with the barbarous Chichemecas. From this source they derived the fiercer and more savage traits in their characters; and even now, notwithstanding that they have to a great extent adopted new customs, and been subjected to the influences of Spanish association for more than three hundred years, the distinguishing traits of the two families are easily to be recognized. The mild, brave but not warlike, industrious, intelligent, and law-abiding Indians about Leon, of the purer Toltecan blood, furnish in their smaller and more rounded forms, their regular features, clear

eyes, and cheerful expression, a decided contrast to the restless, treacherous, and cruel Indians round the ancient city of Nicaragua. The latter are taller, more bony, with sharper and often irregular features, and with an always reserved if not sullen expression. The contrast is hardly greater than between the French and the Dutch. Yet none of these Indians could ever be confounded with the roving tribes of our latitude. They have certain generic or radical identities, but in most physical and mental features, are widely different. Those of Central America are capable of high improvement, and have a facility of assimilation or adaptation. They constitute, when favorably situated, the best class of citizens, and would anywhere make what in Europe is called a good rural or working population. I have found some really comprehensive minds amongst them,—men of quick and acute apprehension, and great decision and energy of character.

In brief, the better I become acquainted with the various aboriginal families of the continent, the higher position I am disposed to award them, and the less I am disposed to assent to the relative rank assigned them by the systematic writers.

I have already mentioned the interview between our American friend in Granada, and the rebel chief, Somoza. Soon after our arrival in Leon, positive information was received that he had been successful in his descent upon San Carlos, and had got possession of the arms and ammunition which had been deposited there. He, however, did not attempt to retain possession of the place, but returned immediately with his spoils to the city of Nicaragua. Meantime, nevertheless, as I have already intimated, the support which he had received from the party opposed to the government, had been entirely withdrawn, in consequence of the excesses which he had committed, and he came back to find his adherents dispirited and rapidly diminishing. The decision and energy of the government further contributed to weaken his

power; and when the General-in-chief arrived in his neighborhood, he was left with less than half his original forces. His spirit, however, never failed him, and he boldly advanced to meet the troops of the government. The first battle was at a place called the "Obraje." Here he was worsted, and compelled to fall back upon his original position, at the town of San George, about a league distant from the city of Rivas, or Nicaragua. General Muñoz, having effected a junction with the volunteers from Granada, who had proceeded by water, attacked him here the next day, (July 14th,) completely routed his forces, and took him and his principal followers prisoners. It is hardly necessary to add that they were tried by court-martial, and shot.

The information of these events was received in Leon with extravagant demonstrations of joy, and for a whole day we were stunned by the firing of guns and the ringing of bells. In the evening the following Bulletin was issued:

"Bernabé Somoza, the author of misfortunes and the cause of evils which can never be repaired, was captured in San Jorge on the evening of the 14th inst., after the defeat of his forces by the army of the Government. Subsequently to the action he was taken to the city of Rivas, tried according to martial law, sentenced to death, and shot (fué pasado por las armas), on the morning of the 17th, in the presence of the entire army. The General in Chief then harangued the troops in the following impressive terms:

"'Soldiers! We have, in a very few days, completed a glorious campaign. This happy result is due to your valor, constancy, subordination, and endurance. The monster, Somoza, the terror of the innocent inhabitants of this department, has suffered the just punishment of his crimes. The robber, the incendiary, the desecrator of temples, the violator of female innocence, the murderer, has passed from beneath the sword of human justice to the awful presence of an offended God! Soldiers, you have saved the honor and preserved the integrity of the State, vindicated humanity, and avenged the violated laws. For this I thank you; you have merited and will receive the gratitude of your country. Should the

occasion arise, (which God forbid!) I shall be proud to lead you again to victory. Long live the Government! God save the Republic!'

"Thus has triumphed the cause of order, of progress, and of reason! Thanks to the illustrious General Muñoz and his brave soldiers, the bulwark and safeguard of the State! Their deeds speak for themselves; they need no encomiums. They teach us an impressive lesson of patriotism and virtue."

These events put an end to the internal disturbances of the State. The followers of Somoza at once disbanded, and returned to their homes. A few arrests were made; but with a moderation which reflected honor upon the government, and commended it to the people at large, a general amnesty was conceded to all who had participated in the insurrection, upon the condition of the surrender of their arms, and the restitution of the property and valuables which they had taken, and which commissioners were appointed to receive, and to restore to their rightful owners.

Upon the 16th of August following, having completely reëstablished order, and taken proper precautions against further disturbances, Gen. Muñoz returned with his forces to Leon. He was met by a deputation from the city at the "Convento," where speeches were made, and congratulations exchanged, and whence the troops marched in triumph to the city. They were received with great enthusiasm, and proceeded in a body to the Cathedral, where the "Te Deum" was sung in acknowledgment of their safe return. The extraordinary battalion was at once disbanded, and the regulars only retained in the service. It was some months, however, before the vigilance of the government was at all diminished, and not until every revolutionary symptom seemed to have died out. Subsequently a medal was voted to the General, "for the excellent services which, under God," he had rendered the State. It was ordered to be of gold, and to contain upon one side a laurel wreath, with the words, "To the Defender of Liberty and Order in Nica-

RAGUA;" and upon the reverse a naked sword, with the inscription, "FOR HIS TRIUMPH OF JULY 14, 1849." Medals were also voted to the subordinate officers who had particularly distinguished themselves on the same occasion; and the "soldiers and patriots" who had fought in the ranks, were decorated upon the left shoulder with a shield, bordered with gold, containing a palm tree in the centre, with two swords crossed below, and the words "RIVAS, JULY 14, 1849." The State also voted a pension "to the wounded, and to the *fathers*, widows, and children of those who had fallen in the service." And at the same time decreed "that in profound recognition of his visible protection, the corporations and authorities of the State, civil and military, would unite in a public and solemn manifestation of thanks to God, in the holy Cathedral, on the 2d of September."

And while upon this subject, I may anticipate events a little, and describe the ceremonial, for which great preparations were made, and which was conducted with great solemnity. Upon the morning of the day high mass was said in the Cathedral, in presence of all the officers of State, and the army. The soldiers occupied the grand aisle, and the citizens filled the outer ones. After this was concluded, a procession was formed, preceded by a large silver cross, beneath which drooped the flag of the State. Then came the military band, next the host, borne by the Bishop in person, beneath a heavy crimson canopy of velvet. He was surrounded by the higher dignitaries of the church, and followed by the officers of the State and army, bare-headed, and all moving in a hollow square of soldiers, also with heads uncovered and guns reversed. Then came the chanters of the Cathedral, the soldiers, and the citizens. But the most singular features of the procession were the statues of the saints, which, borne on men's shoulders, were distributed at intervals throughout the line. Many of these were of the size of life, and in their golden, tinselled, and fantastic robes, pro-

duced a very singular effect. Amongst them was San Benito, a little black fellow, canonized, doubtless, by a far-seeing and politic church to conciliate the colored population. He is, by the way, the most popular saint in Nicaragua, and has a grand annual festival at Masaya, to which devotees flock from all parts of Central America. Men, women, and children alike joined in the "Procession of Peace," which moved slowly through the principal streets, stopping in front of each of the churches to chant a prayer of thanks. It finally returned to the Cathedral, where the "Te Deum" was sung, and the assemblage dismissed under a benediction from the Bishop. No sooner was this more sober part of the ceremony over, than the everlasting ringing of bells and the firing of guns commenced again, and was kept up until dark, when there was an exhibition of fireworks in the plaza.

Thus ended the insurrection of Somoza, and thenceforward Leon wore a more cheerful aspect. The conduct of the government, from its commencement to its close, was marked with great justice and moderation, and afforded, in these respects, a striking and most favorable contrast to that which has for many years distinguished military operations in Central America.

CHAPTER XI.

ANTIQUITIES—ANCIENT STATUE IN THE GRAND PLAZA—MONUMENTS ON THE ISLAND OF MOMOTOMBITA IN LAKE MANAGUA—DETERMINE TO VISIT THEM—THE PADRE PAUL—PUEBLO NUEVO AND OUR OLD HOSTESS—A NIGHT RIDE—"HACIENDA DE LAS VACAS"—A NIGHT AMONGST THE "VAQUEROS"—THE LAKE—OUR BONGO—VISIT THE HOT SPRINGS OF MOMOTOMBO—ATTEMPT TO REACH ONE OF THE "INFERNALES" OF THE VOLCANO—TERRIBLE HEAT—GIVE UP THE ATTEMPT—OVIEDO'S ACCOUNT OF THE VOLCANO—"PUNTA DE LOS PAJAROS"—MOMOTOMBITA—DREAD OF RATTLESNAKES—THE MONUMENTS—RESOLVE TO REMOVE THE LARGEST—A NEST OF SCORPIONS—TRIBULATION OF OUR CREW—HARD WORK—HOW TO SHIP AN IDOL—VIRTUES OF AGUARDIENTE—"PURCHASING AN ELEPHANT"—MORE "PIEDRAS ANTIGUAS"—THE ISLAND ONCE INHABITED—SUPPOSED CAUSEWAY TO THE MAIN LAND—A PERILOUS NIGHT VOYAGE—DIFFICULT LANDING—ALACRAN OR SCORPION DANCE—A FOOT MARCH IN THE FOREST—THE "HACIENDA DE LAS VACAS" AGAIN—SCANT SUPPER—RETURN TO LEON—THE IDOL SENT, VIA CAPE HORN, TO WASHINGTON—A SATISFIED PADRE—IDOLS FROM SUBTIABA—MONSTROUS HEADS—VISIT TO AN ANCIENT TEMPLE—FRAGMENTS—MORE IDOLS—INDIAN SUPERSTITIONS—"EL TORO"—LIGHTING ON TWO LEGS—A CHASE AFTER HORSES—SWEET REVENGE—"CAPILLA DE LA PIEDRA"—PLACE OF THE IDOL—THE FRAY FRANCISCO DE BOBADILLA—HOW HE CONVERTED THE INDIANS—PROBABLE HISTORY OF MY IDOLS—THE ANCIENT CHURCH "LA MERCEDES DE SUBTIABA"—ITS RUINS—GARRAPATAS—TROPICAL INSECTS—SNAKES AND SCORPIONS *versus* FLEAS AND WOOD-TICKS—A CHOICE OF EVILS.

Amongst the objects of interest which early attracted my attention in Leon, was an ancient figure or statue of stone, planted at one of the corners of the principal plaza. It was of basalt, boldly sculptured, and represented a man with his hands clasped on his breast, and apparently seated upon some kind of pedestal. The lower part of the figure, however, had been broken, and the fragment which remained was little more than one-third of the original length. A

fillet was represented bound around the brow, and the head was surmounted by a head-dress somewhat resembling those which are to be observed in some of the ancient Egyptian sculptures. The face was perfect, with the exception of a part of the mouth, which had been broken, and the eyes were apparently closed. The whole expression was grave

IDOL FROM MOMOTOMBITA. NO I.

and serene, and yet so characteristic, that I could not resist the impression that it was copied after a living model. The accompanying engraving will convey a very correct idea of the original, which I procured and presented to the Smithsonian Institution at Washington, where it is now deposited.

The back of the figure is square, grooved on the edge, and notched entirely across, so as to resemble overlapping plates. It will be observed that the shoulders appear to be unnatu-

rally elevated; but upon closer examination it will be seen that the original design seems to have been to represent the figure in the act of supporting some heavy body; suggesting the probability that this, in conjunction with others of similar design, once supported an altar, or another and still larger statue. The flat top favors this supposition.

I found, upon inquiry, that this figure, together with many others, had been obtained from the island of Momotombita, in Lake Managua, where there were still a number of interesting monuments. I at once proposed an expedition to the island, and availing myself of the time pending the commencement of my negotiations with the government, set out on the 26th of July, in company with Dr. Livingston, and Padre Paul, editor of "El Correo del Istmo," the government paper, who was curious in matters of this kind. The Padre was a native of Spain, where he had received a liberal education, but by some mistake had become a priest. I say mistake, not because the Padre was not a good priest, but because nature had intended him for a licenciado, or a politician, if not for a traveller. The government, some days previous to our departure, had sent orders to Managua for boats to be in readiness at a point on the lake, nearest the island, called "Piedras Gordas," and there to await our arrival. It was late in the afternoon when we left the city for Pueblo Nuevo, where we proposed to pass the night. The road was the same over which we had travelled in our journey to Leon; but the season was now further advanced, and the great plain was shrouded with a vegetation three-fold more luxuriant than before. The maize, which a few weeks previously hardly covered the ground, was now breast high; the cactus fences too were relieved by yellow flowers, and the inner leaves surrounding the stalk, bending outward, displayed their delicate pink linings to the sun.

The Padre was mounted on a splendid mule, gaily caparisoned, and with his cassock tucked up, heavy riding boots,

and massive silver spurs, followed by his servant, with an "alforjas," full of edibles, made a dashing figure at the head of our little cavalcade. He rode like a trooper, and seemed to enjoy the freedom of the forest quite as much as any sinner. A stranger might have taken him for a soldier in disguise, or an eager lover speeding to a distant mistress. It was a tearing ride, that twenty-four miles to Pueblo Nuevo, and in less than three hours we dismounted at the door of the house where I had slept on my previous journey. The old lady and her five daughters had had no warning of our coming, and were evidently mortified to be found *sans* satin slippers, and with hair dishevelled. But before supper was ready they all made their appearance in full costume, as before, and we ventured upon a compliment or two by way of compensating for the *contretemps* of our sudden arrival.

We found that it was yet upwards of three leagues to the "Piedras Gordas" where our boat was waiting, and as we were anxious to be there by sunrise, we resolved to proceed to a cattle estate, near the place, that night. The Padre did not relish the idea of leaving comfortable quarters for the doubtful accommodations of the "hacienda de las vacas" and was eloquent in describing the difficulties and dangers of riding through unfrequented forest paths in the night time; but the Padre was in a minority, and had to submit. We accordingly procured a guide, and started. For a couple of miles we kept the main road, and got along smoothly; we then turned off at right angles into the forest. The night was exceedingly dark, and the path narrow, and even in the daytime obscure. But our guide seemed entirely at home, and we followed as well as we were able. Occasionally he shouted "cuidado!" "take care," which was the signal to fall flat on our horses, in order to escape the limbs and branches of the trees. But notwithstanding all our caution, we got some most ungentle thumps and scratches, and were several times nearly dragged from our saddles. Once we became

entangled for a quarter of an hour, in the top of a fallen tree, and had literally to cut our way through it with our swords and machetes. The Padre considerately kept in the rear, and got the benefit of all our experiences. Our progress was necessarily very slow, and I began to fear that we had lost our way, and almost to repent that we had not taken the Padre's advice, when we heard the lowing of cattle and the barking of dogs in the distance. Thus encouraged, we pressed on, and soon came into a broader path. We pursued this for some distance, the barking of the dogs becoming every moment more distinct, until finally emerging from the woods, we galloped towards a little eminence, where a number of fires proclaimed the existence of the cattle rancho. It was surrounded by a kind of stockade, or fence of upright posts, and, as we approached, we were saluted with a ferocious "*Quien vive?*" who are you? Night descents by robbers, on the haciendas, during civil disturbances in the country, are by no means uncommon occurrences; and as the estates have usually a considerable number of men attached to them, they sometimes result in severe fights. Our approach had therefore alarmed the establishment, and had not our guide been known, we might have been turned back with a volley, instead of having the gate opened to us with an invitation to enter. In the centre of the square was a mud house, surrounded by a thatched shed, beneath which a dozen hammocks were suspended. Three or four fires were smouldering just outside of this shed, and around them were reclining some calves which had been bitten by bats, or injured by wild animals. A dozen surly dogs stalked amongst the swarthy "vaqueros," or herdsmen, whose half naked figures were just visible by the faint red light of the fires. A couple of women, alarmed by the sound of voices, hurried, scantily dressed, from the house, but were at once reassured by the Padre. Altogether, with the champing horses, and

the gleaming of arms, shut in as it was by the darkness as with a pall, the scene was singularly wild and picturesque.

The animals attended to, the next thing was to dispose ourselves for the night. The women offered us the house, in which were two naked hide beds. My bones were agonized at the sight of them, and I chose a hammock beneath the shed, and wrapping myself in my blanket, tumbled in. The men gave up their places without grumbling, and stretched themselves on the bare earth. Soon all was still, except the melancholy howl of the "mono colorado," and the low, distant murmur of the lake. I slept soundly until roused by Ben's morning gun at the earliest dawn. He had already prepared a cup of chocolate, which, with a cracker and a *jicara* of fresh milk, constituted our breakfast. The horses were saddled, and giving the princely sum of a rial each to the men whom we had so summarily dislodged, we started for the lake. The road was through a beautiful forest of large trees, which the cattle kept comparatively free from underbrush, and which had occasional open places, where the ground was covered with long fresh grass. Half an hour brought us to the shore. The sun had not yet risen, but a brilliant coronet of rays shot up above the sharply defined and fantastic outlines of the distant mountains of Segovia, and was reflected in the tremulous waters of the lake. Immediately in front, towered the volcano of Momotombo; its lower half purple in the shade, and its upper of the richest amber. A thin column of smoke rose almost perpendicularly from its summit, which first caught the crimson rays of the sun, and then changed to gold. Upon the right, a perfect cone, was the island for which we were bound, and in the foreground our boat, half drawn up on the shore, and near by, at the root of a great tree, clustering around their breakfast fire, was its crew. They had been encamped here for two days, awaiting our arrival; and

would have waited a month for that matter—for what was time to them, so long as the lake furnished fish, and plantains were plenty?

Our horses were fastened to a long rope, one behind the other, and sent back in charge of our guide to the hacienda, with express instructions to have them on the shore again at nightfall, in case we should return. Our boat, like some of the bongos on Lake Nicaragua, was hollowed from the single trunk of a cebia tree. It was upwards of forty feet long, and full six feet broad, permitting a tall man to lie across its bottom. There was no wind, and the men were obliged to take to their oars. And as it was not greatly out of our way, we determined before going to the island to pass to the foot of the great volcano, and visit the hot springs at its base. The intervening bay is upwards of ten miles broad, but we crossed it before nine o'clock. While on the lake, we had an excellent opportunity to view the volcano. It is about six thousand feet, or one mile and a fourth, in perpendicular height, and very steep,—so steep, indeed, that even if there were no danger in the ascent, it would probably be impossible to reach its summit. Its lower half is covered with trees, which in the ravines that seam its sides run up still higher, gradually narrowing like the points of a ruff. The upper half seems made up of scoria, which, near the summit, gives place to ashes of a white color. The crater appears small and regular in outline; and there are some openings on the sides, towards its base, which emit steam and smoke, and around which sulphur is deposited on the rocks. These are called "infernales," and we observed one on the side towards us, at a comparatively small elevation, which greatly excited our curiosity, and which we resolved to visit.

At the point where we landed, the ground was composed of a kind of ochery earth, of a dark red color, varied with yellow, which the boatmen told us was used for paint. A fourth of a mile to the right, and immediately at the edge of

the lake, were the "fuentes calientes," or hot springs. They are hundreds in number: in fact, for a considerable extent, the ground was covered with white incrustations, resembling a field of snow; and as we walked over it, the sound of the water beneath was like that of a violently boiling cauldron. There were numerous openings, from which rose columns of steam, and where the water boiled up to the height of from six inches to two feet. Around some of these places the deposites had gradually built up little cones, with openings in the centre, where the clear water bubbled as in a kettle. I sent specimens of the deposites to the United States for analysis, but they unfortunately miscarried, and I am consequently unable to give the constituents of which they are made up. They will no doubt be duly announced when the "Grand Volcano Hotel, and North American Natural Hot Spring Bath Establishment," shall be opened for invalids, on the shores of Lake Managua.

Between the shore and the true base of the volcano is a gentle slope, ridged with beds of lava, which run down into the lake, but which have become disintegrated on the surface, and are now covered with coarse grass, bushes, and clumps of trees. Here cattle from distant haciendas are allowed to roam from one year's end to the other, until they become almost as wild as the deer themselves. The vaqueros occasionally visit them, to mark the young ones, or to select the best ones for sale, but beyond this they receive no care or attention. We started over this slope, in the direction of the smoking orifice which we had observed from the lake. But we were under the lee of the mountains, where not a breath of wind reached us, and exposed to the full glow of the sun; and before we had gone a mile, we almost repented of our undertaking. The doctor, the padre, and myself alone persisted in proceeding. The surface became rougher as we advanced, and scrubby trees and thorny bushes impeded our progress, and shut out from view the place which

we were struggling to reach. We next came to ridges of treacherous, scoriaceous sand, which yielded beneath our feet, and which we only ascended by clinging to the clumps of grass which grew here and there, and by driving our swords to their hilts in the ground, as supports. But our progress was slow and painful, and we were compelled to pause every second minute to recover our strength. Finally, the sun was no longer hot, it was withering, and the dry scoriæ became blistering to the touch. I looked up towards the top of the volcano, and shall never forget its utterly bald and desolate appearance. The atmosphere on its sides seemed to undulate with heat, and the reflected rays burned my eyeballs. I turned to my companions, and found that they suffered equally with myself. The padre had wisely bound his handkerchief over his head and eyes. It was folly, he said, to attempt to go further, and we concurred with him, and retraced our steps. The descent was of course comparatively easy, but when I reached the boat, I was completely exhausted, and adequately convinced of the folly of attempting to climb volcanoes under a tropical sun, at mid-day.

Oviedo speaks of this volcano as one very high, "its summit pierced by a multitude of separate orifices, whence smoke is always rising, which can be seen at the distance of twenty leagues. No flame," he continues, "is visible by day or night. An abundance of sulphur may be found here, according to the report of those who have used it in the manufacture of powder, and also of those who have used it for other purposes. On the sides and parts adjacent to this volcano, for a distance of five or six leagues, there is an abundance of springs of boiling water like the Sufretarari, (Solfatara,) that may be seen at Pouzzole, two or three leagues from Naples. I should think that all these mountains formed but one mine of sulphur. There are also orifices through which proceeds a stream of air, so warm as to be unendurable. If we approach it, we seem to hear the uproar of a vast number

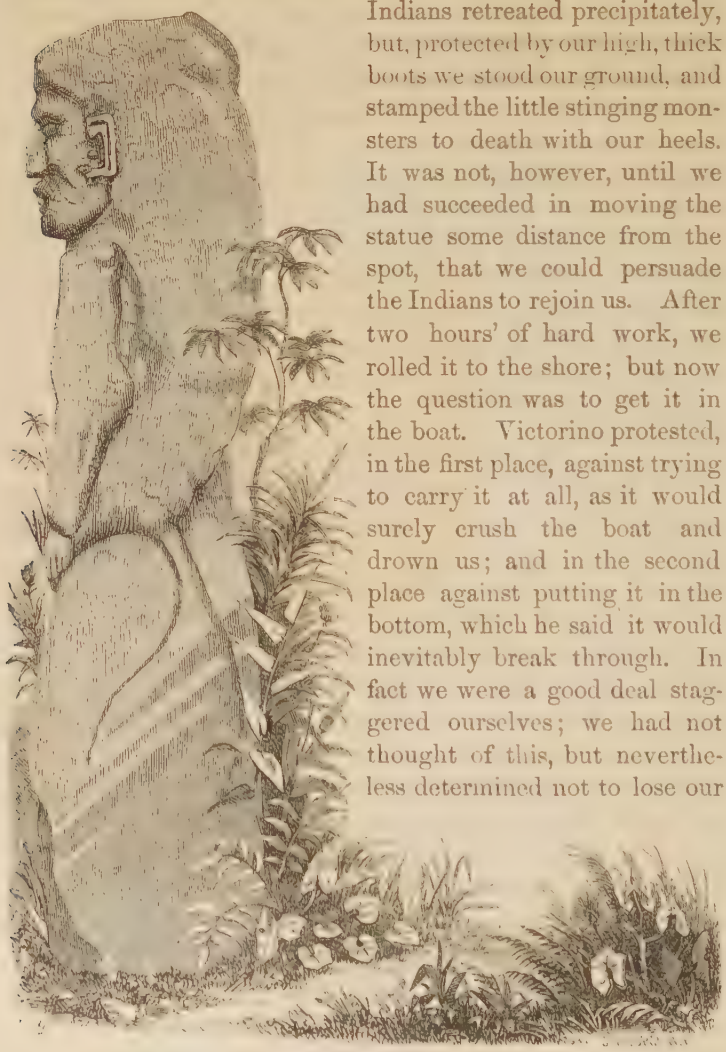
of forges in full blast, sometimes ceasing, and in a few moments recommencing again; but the time the noise can be heard is at least four times as long as the pauses. Near the village of Totoa is a thermal spring, so warm that the Indians use it for cooking their meat, fish, and bread. These articles of food are cooked in less time than it would take to repeat the *Credo* twice; and as for eggs, they would be *done* sooner than an *Ave*."

We found our men quietly smoking their cigars under the shade of a tree, perfectly careless as to whether they stayed there all day or proceeded. Such an imperturbable set I verily believe were never before got together. We told them to push off for the island, which they did in the most leisurely manner. The wind had begun to blow, and as it was against us, they towed the boat along under the lee of the shore, walking by its side in the water, which, at the distance of a quarter of a mile out, was hardly breast-deep. We saw many deer, and a number of lazy alligators on the shore, but beyond the reach of our rifles. We finally came to the "Punta del Pajaro," a high ledge of naked basaltic rocks projecting out into the lake, and covered with myriads of water-fowls. Here our men took to their oars, and paddled direct for the island. The afternoon wind was now blowing strongly, and the lake was rough. It required two hours' hard rowing to bring us to the island, where we pulled ashore in a little cove, protected from the swell of the lake.

This island is volcanic, and rises in a regular cone from the water's edge, to the height of two thousand eight hundred feet. It is about eight miles in circumference, and is covered with a dense forest. The shore where we landed was stony, but a short distance back the stones gave place to sand and a rich loam. Victorino, our patron, knew the locality of the monuments, and putting on his sandals, took his machete, and led the way, peering suspiciously to the right and the left. We inquired the cause of his caution, and received the

comforting assurance "hay muchos cascabeles," "there are many rattlesnakes!" The Dr. whipped out his sword, stepped high, and constantly startled us by mistaking vines, coiling on the ground, for "cascabeles." After proceeding for about half an hour, we came to a spot where the underbrush and bushes gave place to high grass. Here was a kind of natural amphitheatre, within which the ground was smooth, sloping gently towards the lake, and shadowed over with high trees. This, Victorino informed us, was the site of the monuments, but they had all fallen, and the tall grass hid them from our view. We were compelled to beat it down with our machetes, and thus discover the figures one by one. As I have said, many had been carried away, and most of those which remained were broken, or so defaced as to be of little value for my purposes. Victorino said that he could remember when there were as many as fifty statues here, and when some of them stood erect. According to his account and that of others, they had been arranged in the form of a square, their faces looking inwards; and the position of those which remained, and of the fragments, confirmed the story. Amongst the few still entire, was one of large size, and which a party, sent by the English Consul, had a few years before endeavored to carry away for the British Museum, but after getting it part of the way to the lake, had abandoned it in despair. It was ruder than some of the others, but perfect, and I at once resolved to remove it, with a view of sending it to the United States. I accordingly sent Victorino to bring his boat and men to the nearest point possible, and with Dr. Livingston, the Padre, and Ben, began to cut down small trees of the proper size for skids or pries, and to open a path to the lake. When Victorino came with his lazy crew, we set them to work also, but they did not accomplish much, and we soon found that we had to bear the burthen of the labor ourselves. With great difficulty we cleared a road, and laying down large skids rolled the figure

upon them. Beneath it a colony of "alacrans del monte," or black scorpions, had established themselves; and in an instant they swarmed around our legs. The half naked Indians retreated precipitately, but, protected by our high, thick boots we stood our ground, and stamped the little stinging monsters to death with our heels. It was not, however, until we had succeeded in moving the statue some distance from the spot, that we could persuade the Indians to rejoin us. After two hours' of hard work, we rolled it to the shore; but now the question was to get it in the boat. Victorino protested, in the first place, against trying to carry it at all, as it would surely crush the boat and drown us; and in the second place against putting it in the bottom, which he said it would inevitably break through. In fact we were a good deal staggered ourselves; we had not thought of this, but nevertheless determined not to lose our



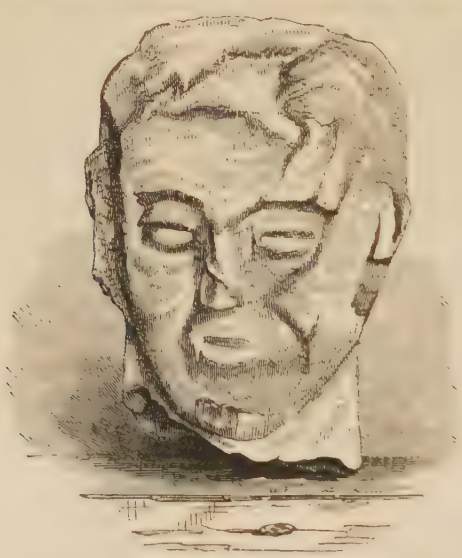
IDOL FROM MOMOTOMBITA. NO. 2.

labor. If it was put at the bottom, even though it might not break through, it was clear that we never could muster force enough to get it out. So we decided that it should be carried by placing it lengthwise on the rowers' seats, which, in order to support the weight, were to be strengthened by crossbars. The men stood aghast at our proposition, and at first utterly refused to assist us. They took the padre aside and told him that "these Americans were certainly crazy." We however promised them each a half dollar extra, administered a dose of

FRONT VIEW OF HEAD OF NO. 2.

brandy and water, and finally got them to take hold again An inclined plane of timbers was built up against the boat, which was half filled with stones, to sink her as low as possible, and to fix her firmly in the sand. The statue was then gradually rolled on board. More than once I thought our fabric would break down; had it done so there would have been more crushed legs than whole ones in the company. After it was secured, part of the stones were thrown out, and we soon had the satisfaction of seeing the bongo afloat, and perfectly balanced. A profile view of this figure is given in the foregoing engraving. It is regularly cut in black ba-

salt, or trachyte, of intense hardness. The features of the face are singularly bold and severe in outline; the brow is broad, the nose aquiline, the cheeks high, the mouth open, and containing what we may infer (for reasons which will be given elsewhere) was intended to represent a human heart. The arms and legs are rudely indicated, but the distinctive sexual features are broadly marked. And here it may be observed that, while most of these statues represent males,



COLOSSAL HEAD FROM MOMOTOMBITA.

some of them represent females; and there are but few in which the sex is not distinguishable. The reason for these distinctions may be found in the fact that the doctrine of the Reciprocal Principles of Nature, or Nature Active and Passive Male and Female, was recognized in nearly all the primitive religious systems of the New as well as of the Old World, and in none more clearly than in those of Central America. Besides this figure, we carried off the colossal head represented in the above drawing; but found nothing more which would

repay the trouble of removal. There may have been other figures of interest hidden in the long grass and bushes; and Victorino informed us that upon the opposite side of the island there was still another place, where there were formerly many "piedras antiguas;" but that also was overgrown with grass. It was now late, and unless we spent the night on the island, it was clear we could make no further examinations. And as I proposed to return in the dry season, when the grass might be removed by burning, we concluded to relinquish our explorations for the present.

The island of Momotombita was anciently inhabited, and called Cocobolo. I observed fragments of pottery, and of vessels of stone, strewed all over the shore; and in the little cove where we landed there were evidences that the rocks had been rolled away to facilitate the approach of boats to the land. At a point on the shore of the main land, nearly opposite the island, is a line of large stones, extending for the distance of one or two hundred yards into the water, and projecting above it. The Indians have a vague tradition that this was a causeway built by "los antiguos habitantes," extending from the shore to the island; and Capt. Belcher, of the British navy, who travelled here in 1838, seems to think the story not improbable. The supposed causeway is nothing more than a narrow vein of rock injected at some remote period through a fissure in the superior strata or crust of the earth; and being harder than the materials surrounding it, has retained its elevation, while they have been worn away by the action of the water.

It was quite sunset when we pushed off from the island; and when we got out from under its lee, we found the wind blowing a gale, and the sea high. Ours was a ticklish load; and, as the bongo had no keel, the necessity of keeping her directly before the wind was obvious; for had she rolled a foot on either side, the stone would have overset us in a twinkling. Victorino was anxious but cool, and his men

were too much alarmed not to obey orders, and we put up the sail and got under way without accident. Fortunately the winds here blow with great steadiness, or our voyage might have been rendered more perilous than it was, and that would have been quite unnecessary. The night fell, dark and cloudy; the Padre and M—— soon became seasick, and the crew, consoling themselves that we had a priest on board, gathered around the foot of the mast, and silently told their beads. Ben stationed himself, knife in hand, at the halyards, and I clung to a stick of light wood which I found in the boat, and calculated the chances of getting ashore by its aid, in case our stone god should upset us. Altogether we had a serious time, and the three hours which we occupied in passing to the land seemed quite as long as six under ordinary circumstances. It was so dark that we could not distinguish the shore, but fortunately the fire, left by the men in the morning, fanned by the wind, had caught in the trunk of the tree at the foot of which it was built, and answered the purpose of a lighthouse in guiding us to our destination. Here we succeeded in landing under the lee of some large rocks, against which the surf broke with the force and noise of the ocean. I now quite comprehended why Capt. Belcher, old salt as he was, declined venturing upon this lake, even after having brought a boat for the purpose all the way from Realejo. I felt no ordinary degree of satisfaction when I found myself on terra firma once more. In removing the loose articles of our equipment from the boat, Ben was twice stung in the hand by a scorpion, and danced about the shore in an agony of pain. I however wrapped his hand in a cloth soaked in brandy, and gave him copious internal doses of the same,—the best, and usually the most accessible, remedy.

Our horses were not to be found; either our guide had not brought them down, or else had returned with them to the rancheria. We held a council as to whether it was best to

camp on the shore or push through the forest to our quarters of the preceding night. The uncomfortable wind and a few heavy drops of rain decided us; and, with Victorino, bearing some brands of fire at our head, we set out. It was as dark as Erebus in the woods, and quite impossible to discern the person next in advance. We however followed the fire, and after a weary march came to the hacienda. We were tired and hungry, but there was nothing to eat except *tiste* and curds. We made the most of these, but went to our hammocks unsatisfied, consoling ourselves, however, with the prospect of an illimitable breakfast at the house of our hostess of the five slippered daughters, in Pueblo Nuevo.

Before leaving next morning, I distributed the promised favors amongst our crew, and engaged the entire force of the estate to assist our guide, who was to return with a cart for the statue. A few days after, it reached Leon, having broken down three carts on the road. I subsequently sent it to Realejo, whence it was shipped, via Cape Horn, for the United States. It is now deposited in the Museum of the Smithsonian Institution, at Washington. And thus terminated my first antiquarian episode in Nicaragua. The Padre expressed himself satisfied; one such ride, he said, was enough for a lifetime.

I have elsewhere said that the Indians of Subtiaba brought me two idols, shortly after my arrival in Leon. A reduced back view of the first of these is presented in the subjoined engraving. It had been broken, and a portion, perhaps comprising one-third of the entire figure, had been lost. The part which remains is something less than six feet in height by eighteen inches in diameter, or upwards of four feet in circumference. The face has been battered with heavy sledges, and its features obliterated. The ornaments upon the back and elsewhere are, however, very well preserved, and are quite elaborate; more resembling those of Copan than any others discovered in the country. The face seems

to project through the widely distended jaws of some animal, the head of which serves as a head dress. The ancient Mexican soldiers had a common practice of wearing the heads of animals, or helmets in imitation of them, on their heads in battle, to render themselves horrible, and frighten their enemies. Upon its breast the figure sustains a kind of plate, or some piece of armor, and upon its right arm wears

IDOL FROM SUBTIABA. NO. 1.

a shield. The carving seems to have been very good; but the zeal of the early Christians, and the corroding tooth of time, have greatly injured the entire statue, which is now in the Museum of the Smithsonian Institution.

IDOL FROM SUBTIABA, No. 2.—This figure closely resem-

bles that just described, and, like that, has suffered greatly from the same cause. The features of the face are entirely obliterated; the design of the head dress is, however, more apparent, and is palpably what I have already indicated, the

IDOL FROM SUBTIABA, NO. 2.

jaws of some monstrous animal, between which the face of the figure projects. It is less elaborately sculptured than No. 1, but of the same material, and corresponding in size. One hand rests upon the breast, the other hangs loosely at the side. This idol also is deposited in the museum of the Smithsonian Institution.

IDOLS FROM SUBTIABA, No. 3.—Subsequent to the presentation of the two figures above described, I had a frag-

ment brought to me, of which a front view is given in the annexed engraving. It is of sand-stone, two feet six inches high, by ten or twelve inches in diameter, much frayed and worn by exposure, and greatly injured by violence. It bears evidences of having been elaborately ornamented, and seems to have been designed to represent a female. Its most singular feature, however, is a mask of the human face, which is held upon the abdomen by both hands. Perhaps, however, the Indians were right in suggesting that it represents an opening in the abdomen, held apart by the hands, and exposing some mythological figure therein concealed. There are some reasons in support of this suggestion, which it would hardly be proper to submit in a work of this popular character. This figure has also been broken, and less than half of it now remains.

IDOL FROM SUBTIABA, NO. 3.

The idols above described, as I have already said, were brought to my house by the Indians; and I know nothing concerning them, except that they were exhumed near the base of the Cerro Santiago, to the south-west of Leon, where they had been buried for several generations. I subsequently learned of the existence of others in the same direction, and went, in company with a guide, kindly obtained for me by Gen. Guerrero, to examine them. Our route lay through Subtiaba, in the direction of the ocean. We passed over a beautiful undulating country, full of abandoned plantations, and watered by several fine streams, skirting the hills to the south-west of Leon. At the distance of about

IDOLS OF SUBTIABA, Nº 4.

three or four leagues from the city, we came to a series of "jicarales," in the midst of which was a cattle estate. Cows and deer were herding together, the latter appearing quite as tame as the first. Beyond the hacienda was a high, bare hill, steep as the pyramids, called Mount St. Michael, the base of which is studded round with large loose stones, causing our horses to stumble fearfully, and over which we passed with great difficulty. We then came to the finest "jicaral" I had yet seen. It resembled a well-kept New England orchard: the trees had fewer parasites to rob them of their vitality, and the ground was covered with a smooth carpet of grass. Intermixed with these were numbers of the wild "jocote" or plum-trees, heavily laden with yellow and red fruit, which was not unpleasant to the taste, but which poisoned my lips, and made them sore for a week. The same fruit, when cultivated, is fine, and is used in a great variety of ways. The forest in which the idols were concealed commenced abruptly upon one side of the "jicaral," and was an almost impenetrable mass of vines, underbrush, and broad-leaved tropical plants. A thousand monuments might have been buried here for years without being discovered, except by the merest accident; and as we had to cut our path with our swords, I began to have serious misgivings as to the success of our expedition. Our guide, however, peering from side to side, seemed confident as to his whereabouts, as well as to that of the "piedras," and in half an hour we came to the spot where they had existed. I say had existed, for although the ground was strewn with fragments, but a single figure, "Idol from Subtiaba, No. 4," remained entire. It stood as shown in the accompanying plate, partially buried in the earth. Its height above the ground was six feet four inches; the material, sand-stone. As in the other instances, the face had been mutilated, but the remainder of the figure was nearly perfect. The hair seemed to be thrown back from the forehead in rolls; or perhaps what I

have supposed to be the hair is a modified example of that kind of ornamental featherwork so common in the ancient monuments of Mexico, Yucatan, and Central America. A broad collar passes around the neck, and a circular plate, or shield, with an attempt at a representation of a human face in the centre, is suspended from it, in front of the figure. A kind of belt passes around the body, above the hips, from which depends a flap, like that frequently worn by the Indians of the frontiers, even to this day. At the lower extremity of this is a round, cup-shaped hole, capable of containing about a quart, the purposes of which are not apparent.

In cutting paths around this figure, I came upon an oblong elevation of stones, which seemed to have been the base of some edifice, or one of the ancient teocallis or altars of the aborigines. It was about two hundred feet long, sixty broad, and ten high. Around the edges the stones still retained some degree of regularity, but the whole was nevertheless a ruin, and large trees were growing on its summit. The numerous fragments of sculpture scattered around this spot showed conclusively that it had been visited by systematic violence, not only anciently, at the period of the Conquest, but subsequently, and within a very few years. My guide told me that he could remember the time when the Indians came here secretly by night, and performed strange dances around these idols, and poured out libations before them. The ground around the single erect figure above described was comparatively free from undergrowth, showing that even now it is secretly visited, by the descendants of the people who first erected it, for the performance of traditionary, sacred ceremonies. The priests are vigilant in detecting and putting down these remnants of idolatry; and only a few months before my arrival had broken up a remarkable figure of an animal called "El Toro," the bull, which existed about a league distant from this very spot, and to which the Indians, for a long time, openly resorted, to make offerings of

tiste, and to perform dances preparatory to putting their crops in the ground. The destruction of the idol was effected secretly, and afterwards proclaimed to have been done by the lightnings of indignant heaven; but one of my Indian friends told me privately that the Indians understood the trick, and knew that this lightning went on two legs, and wore a cassock! I would have gone to the spot, and endeavored to have restored the fragments for a sketch, but my guide told me that the natives had carried them off and buried them.

While engaged with the stones, we had carelessly, and as usual, let our horses go loose. For the first time, they now took it into their heads to abuse this indulgence, and trotted off. The more we endeavored to coax them back the more vicious they were, and finally dashed off at full speed into the "jicaral," where they kicked up their heels in great glee. The prospect of a walk back to Leon, with the loss of saddles, pistols, swords, and other et ceteras, if not of the brutes themselves, was little calculated to excite our admiration of these antics. The chase continued half an hour, when we succeeded in securing the horse of our guide; but unfortunately he was the poorest of the whole, and not able to come near the others in a race. Luckily our guide had a lasso, and after another half hour of manœuvring, in which we all got heated and angry, my own horse was secured. He was duly "lathered" for his pains, and was handed over to the guide to pursue the others; being the fleetest, the business was soon done. We took precious good care that they should not get the upper hand of us again that day, and rode them home with a malignant pressure on the terrible Mexican bit, and with no stinted application of the equally terrible Spanish-American spur.

Upon our return, the guide conducted us out of our way into a kind of amphitheatre amongst the hills, to what he called the "Capilla de la Piedra," the Stone Chapel. It was a large rock of conical shape, placed high on the slope

facing the entrance to this natural circus, and upon that side had a niche, or hollow, capable of containing four or five persons, and which seemed to have been cut in the rock. I failed to satisfy myself whether it was natural or artificial; but finally concluded, from its position and regularity, that it was a natural opening in the rock, enlarged and modified by art. There were traces of fire, and fragments of broken pottery around it, and immediately in front a large flat stone, which might have been used for an altar. As I looked at it, surrounded by rough, frowning rocks, and shrouded with vines, I fancied it an appropriate niche for an idol, and imagined this natural amphitheatre filled with a superstitious multitude, in blind adoration before it, while the blood of human sacrifices flowed perhaps on the very spot where I now stood.

I have said that I knew not whence the Indians obtained the idols which they brought to me, beyond that they were exhumed at the base of the Cerro de Santiago, near Subtiaba. Now the Fray Francisco de Bobadilla, of the Order of Mercy, was especially active in the conversion of the Indians of Nicaragua, which process, according to the chronicler Oviedo y Valdez, consisted in baptizing them, giving them a Christian name, and exacting forty grains of cacao! Bobadilla converted forty thousand in three months in the dominions of the cazique of Nagrando, whose principal town was where the city of Leon now stands. He also prevailed upon the cazique to allow him to throw down the idols which stood in "the spacious and sumptuous temple which the Indians, under the special direction of the devil, had erected there," and to set up the cross in their stead. After he had battered the faces of these idols with a mace, Bobadilla threw them down from their high places, intending to burn them with fire, in order to show the Indians the impotence of their *teots:* but, "during the night some did take them away and buried them, so that they could not be found." And it is

not unlikely that those are the very idols exhumed for me by the Indians of Subtiaba, two of which, after doubling the Horn, now frown down upon the "hijos de Washington," from the west corridor of the Smithsonian Institution!

Upon the site of this temple was afterwards built the Christian church "La Mercedes de Subtiaba," which for more than two hundred years has been in ruins. Its adobe walls have subsided into brambly mounds, and all is formless save the piers on which its wooden pillars stood, and its low, Moorish archway, flanked by two slender columns, which rise white and spectral above a tangled mass of verdure. The town, of which it was once the centre, has shrunk in the lapse of time, and is now a mile distant; and the aboriginal city of which Bobadilla speaks, which covered three square leagues, and had more than one hundred thousand inhabitants, has dwindled to less than one fourth of that number. We visited this church on our return. Ben cut away the bushes with his *machete*, and we rode over the outline mounds, and stood where the simple Indians had knelt, centuries ago, in silent awe before the symbols of a new and imposing religion. A few rude wooden crosses marked the deep pits within which were heaped the victims of the cholera, when in 1837, five years after it had devastated our country, it more than decimated the population of Leon. Two or three Indians, returning from their daily toil in the fields, hearing our voices, pushed their way through the bushes, and reverently took off their hats, when they entered the sacred area. We asked them if they knew aught of the ancient church, or who built it? "*Quien sabe?*" was the sole reply, and they moved the forefinger of the right hand slowly back and forth, in token of ignorance. It was very ancient, they said—"muy, muy antigua!" Upon the smooth stucco beneath the arch, rudely scratched in the lime, I read, "JUAN PERALTA, *Estranjero*, 1732."

This church was built before Hudson floated on the waters of the magnificent river bearing his name; before the Pilgrims knelt on the wintry shores of New England, and before Smith spread the terrors of his arm among the Indians of Virginia. And unless some sacrilegious hand shall level the ancient archway, it will yet stand for centuries to mark the site of aboriginal superstition, and attest the zeal of the Fray Bobadilla, who baptized forty thousand Indians, receiving therefor, if they all "paid up," one million six hundred thousand grains of cacao. Pious Bobadilla!

There are several other ruined and abandoned Christian churches now buried in the forests in the suburbs of Subtiaba, the dwelling-places of the bats and birds, over whose crumbling walls, and around whose falling columns, creep the wild vines, blooming with flowers, and shedding their fragrance above the silent and deserted altars of the Most High. Ruins upon ruins—Christian church and heathen shrine, they have all sunk down together.

We returned to Leon to find ourselves covered with "agarrapatas" or wood ticks, with which the forest fairly swarms during the dry season, and which are brushed off upon travellers by the thousand. They penetrate straight to the skin, and bury their heads in the flesh, causing an irritation which drives many people to distraction. When once fastened it is impossible to detach them by force, without leaving the head in the flesh, where it gets along on its own account, apparently a great deal better than when encumbered by the body. The only mode of removing them is with a ball of soft wax, which is rubbed over the body, and to which they adhere. Some are small, hardly visible to the naked eye, others are of the size of flax, and even of melon seeds; but "the smaller the worser." Next to the fleas they rank as the predominant annoyance of the country. Musquitoes (sancudos), in Leon, the principal towns, and the open

parts of the country generally, there are none; but compared with fleas and "agarrapatas," the snakes, scorpions, "chinches," "sancudos," and all the other abominations of tropical climates are mere bagatelle, and scarcely worth the mentioning.

SIDE VIEW OF IDOL FROM SUBTIABA, NO 1.

CHAPTER XII.

AMUSEMENTS IN LEON—COCK FIGHTING—"PATIO DE LOS GALLOS"—DECLINE OF THE COCK PIT—GAMING—BULL BAITING—NOVEL RIDING—"UNA SAGRADA FUNCION," OR MYSTERY—A POEM, AND A DRAMA—"UNA COMPANIA DE FUNAMBULOS," OR ROPE DANCERS—GREAT ANTICIPATIONS—A NOVEL THEATRE—THE PERFORMANCE—"LA JOVENA CATALINA," AND THE "ECCENTRIC CLOWN, SIMON,"—"TOBILLOS GRUESOS," OR "BIG ANKLES."—"FIESTAS," AND SAINTS' DAYS—THE "FIESTA" OF ST. ANDREW—DANCE OF THE DEVILS—UNEARTHLY MUSIC—ALL-SAINTS' DAY—A CARNIVAL IN SUBTIABA—AN ABRUPT CONCLUSION.

THE novelty of a first visit once worn off, there is little to interest the stranger in Leon. There are no "stated" amusements, except at the cock-pit, which is open every Sunday afternoon. This is always crowded, but not often visited by the better portion of the population. It is a smooth spot of ground in the court-yard of the proprietor's house, fenced in by canes to the height of about four feet, surrounded by high benches, and covered with a thatched roof. In the corridors of the house are little stalls, in which the cocks are kept, and here the wife and daughters of the proprietor sell chocolate and dulces to the visitors. No liquors are allowed upon the premises; and the Government, with a wise prevision, has always an alcalde and a file of soldiers present to preserve order. Visitors are admitted at a medio a head, and each one is at liberty to bring his "bird" with him. If a match cannot be made otherwise, the proprietor is obliged to accept the challenge of any of his visitors. A certain sum is paid to him on each cock entered, one-fourth of which goes into the city treasury. I visited the place but once, and suppose that the manner of fighting the cocks can afford but

little, of what, I believe, is called "sport." After a match was made up, the cocks had long, sword-shaped gaffs, double-edged, sharp as needles, and in some cases three or four inches long, bound on their legs, with which they almost invariably crippled themselves in their preliminary manœuvers. The contests were consequently very brief; one or two passes generally finished them. The bets were never high, but the excitement none the less in consequence. In former times, the proprietor told me, he numbered all the "caballeros" of the city amongst his visitors, and then golden ounces were wagered instead of dirty rials,—and he drew a handful of the latter from his pocket with a contemptuous sneer, and then violently thrust them back again. He longed for a change: any change would be acceptable to him which should bring back the caballeros and the golden ounces!

But because the more respectable people of Leon do not frequent the cock-pit, it is not to be inferred that they are wholly averse to the species of amusement practised there. On the contrary, in the back corridors of the houses,—and in none more frequently than in those of the padres,—a dozen fine cocks may almost always be found, or at all events heard, if not seen. Quiet little parties are got up of afternoons, cocks fought, and not unfrequently, on such occasions, if report speaks true, golden ounces find themselves suddenly transferred from one "bolsa" to another.

Gaming is a passion amongst the people of all Spanish America. But in Nicaragua it is conducted with less publicity and perhaps to a less extent than in most of the Spanish States. Nevertheless, I heard of instances during my residence in the country, in which thousands of dollars had changed hands in a single evening. The game is, I believe, universally, the well-known "*monte*." There are several billiard-rooms in Leon, which seemed to be always full; but they were not very elegant nor even clean. And in the

Calle Real there was a licensed gaming-house, "Casa de Juego," the only one, I believe, in the city. It was crowded every night by the lower classes of the population. The gambling, as might be inferred from the character of its frequenters, was of a petty kind,—of the "dirty rial" order of our friend of the "patio de los gallos."

Central America commenced its Republican career with very sweeping reforms, taking the United States for its model. Amongst the earliest acts of its government was the prohibition of bull-fighting. The old taste for that amusement has not, however, died out, but has assumed a somewhat different form. It was a festival week in the barrio of the Calvario,—*what* festival I do not remember, for there was no end to the fiestas and saint's days,—and we were told that it was to end with "uno juego de los toros," or bull baiting, (as near as I could understand it,) in the plaza of the church of that district. In fact the cura waited upon us in person, and invited us to attend. We went in the afternoon, and found a high, strong fence built around the square, with a supplementary enclosure outside, leading into the larger one by a narrow passage closed with heavy bars. The roof and towers of the church were covered with people, mostly women, and amongst them was a band of music. All around the square, and clinging to the fence was a swarm of naked muchachos, and outside of these a great number of horsemen, who, seated on their steeds, could distinctly witness the whole performance. Amongst these we took up our position, the crowd giving us the most commanding place, while an officious alcalde whipped the boys off the fence in front, so as to allow an uninterrupted view. The music kept up a great noise, but the crowd had waited a long time, and were impatient, and assuming the universal prerogatives of crowds, cried out to the musicos "to stop their noise," and to the managers "to bring in the bulls." Directly the bars of the smaller enclosure were raised, and a horseman dashed in

with a lasso attached to his saddle, dragging after him a large black bull, by the horns. He drove at full gallop around the square, and then adroitly pulled the bull, which was now furious, to a stout post in the centre, where by a few dexterous evolutions he fastened him securely, with his head motionless against the post. Three or four men now approached, and cautiously, and with much difficulty, fastened an "albardo" or common saddle of the country on the back of the bull, securing it firmly by bands around the body of the animal. Fireworks were then fastened to its horns and tail, and an invitation extended to whoever might choose *á manejar el toro*. Two or three stalwart fellows, ambitious of distinction, volunteered, one of whom was chosen. He mounted very adroitly, and securing himself in his seat, the fireworks were lighted, and the rope cut. The bull bounded away amidst the explosion of bombas, the beating of drums, and the shouts of the multitude, foaming with rage, making awkward but prodigious leaps, and driving at every object which came in view. There were three or four horsemen in the ring with staves having a little red flag at one end, and a sharp spike at the other. These they alternately dashed before the eyes of the bull, or drove into his flanks. When the fireworks commenced to explode, the toro no longer made at any particular object, but dashed blindly from side to side, throwing the rider from his seat into the dust, where, for a moment, I thought he would be trampled to death, but he scrambled up and made a rapid retreat, evidently more frightened than hurt, over the barricade, amidst the jeers of the crowd, who would have been better satisfied if he had come off with a broken limb or two, or had been killed outright. The exertion was too much for the bull himself, and after chasing the horsemen around for awhile, he marched off, with his tongue hanging from his mouth, and covered with foam, into a corner of the enclosure. There was no more sport to be got out of him, and the crowd vociferated

"take him away! take him away!" So one of the horsemen threw a lasso over his horns and dragged him out.

Another bull was then introduced, and the same process repeated. But this time the rider kept his seat to the end, and for his skill or good luck, got a plentiful supply of vivas from the boys, and of waving of scarfs from the women. It is impossible to describe the excitement of the multitude during the active parts of the exhibition; some stamped and leaped about, and all shouted at the top of their lungs. When the bull lacked spirit, they cried "away with the old cow! take away the heifer!" and stoned him from the enclosure. I soon got enough of the exhibition, and would have gone off, but the cura prevailed on me to stay for the final act, which he said would be "muy glorioso," very glorious. Four bulls were then let loose together, but this time the officer in command of the file of soldiers which was present, permitted no riders. The precaution was a wise one, for only a few months before two men had been killed by way of a "grand finale." The bulls, maddened by the noise and fireworks flashing in their eyes and whizzing in their ears, attacked each other with the greatest fury, and one was dragged out dead from the encounter. His flesh was claimed for the poor of the barrio, and according to usage he was surrendered to them. This kind of amusement I found was a favorite one throughout the State.

I subsequently witnessed an exhibition of a different kind, in the same place. It was announced as "*Una Sagrada Funcion*," sometimes called "*Sainete*," a solemnity or mystery. It fell on a clear moonlight night, and was one of the most singular spectacles which can be imagined. A kind of stage was erected upon one side of the plaza, raised some six feet from the ground, with a place behind, concealed by variously colored cloths, for the participants. In front was a framework of wood, supporting a great number of flaring tallow candles. When we reached the plaza it was crowded

with spectators. Many had brought their chairs with them, and were seated in a semi-circle, in front of the stage, but most were standing in groups and engaged in earnest conversation. All the gallants were out, and nearly all carried long naked Toledos under their arms,—a common practice on the occasion of night gatherings. The law, however, forbids pistols, as well as swords or knives under a certain length. It was a famous opportunity for all kinds of intrigue, and I soon began to suspect that there would be more love-making than anything else during the "funcion." But what I saw and heard bearing upon this point, is neither here nor there. Enough for me to say, I got a comfortable seat in the midst of a bevy of the fairest señoritas, and enjoyed the "funcion" as much as the best of them.

In front of the stage was a kind of orchestra, made up of an infinitude of fiddles and cracked clarionets, which discoursed most melancholy music, for half an hour after we came upon the ground. At the end of that time, it was announced that Señor Z., a young man who wrote poetry and wore his hair long, after the manner of bardlings the world over, would recite an appropriate poem. The Señor came forward, bowed low, and after telling us what he proposed to say in plain prose commenced his poem. It related to Christ, dealt largely in superlatives, and complimented our Saviour much after the manner a love-sick youth might be supposed to address his mistress. The only redeeming point was the manner, and the clear, distinct enunciation with which it was given. It was listened to with attention, and vehemently applauded at its close. While the speaker was in the midst of his heroics, and the entire assemblage silent, I heard a heavy regular tramp, and turning, saw a detachment of troops, marching slowly through the crowd, their arms glancing in the moonlight. They defiled into the shade, close to the wall of the church, and at the word of command, their muskets came down with a startling clang

upon the pavement. There they stood, like bronze statues during the whole evening. This incident will illustrate the condition of the country better than an essay.

After the poem, the music struck up again, and we were treated to a lugubrious song by two men and three women, but I could not make out what it was about. Vocal music is certainly at a low ebb in Nicaragua; *nasal* music, however, is flourishing. Fortunately the people make no pretensions to musical accomplishments, and thus criticism is disarmed.

A kind of drama, in two acts, borrowed from the Bible, followed the vocal entertainments, in which a shallow, rattling character or clown was introduced, with other comic accessories. This was by far the best part; the clown was a rare fellow, and acquitted himself well; but the serious part was very serious. The characters talked in a kind of monotonous recitative, like automatons, and without a particle of action. An hour's endurance of this was enough for a Christian, and throwing some silver in the box of a man who went round for the purpose of making a collection for the benefit of the church, I left, in company with the señoritas, who inquired if similar "funcions" were common in the United States? I told them yes, but that our padres consigned all those who frequented them to the demonio, whereupon the señoritas opened their big, black eyes, and ejaculated "Mira!" do tell!

But all these "funcions" paled before an exhibition by "Una Compañia Española de Funámbulos," under the direction of Sr. D. Pedro Serrate, which came to Leon shortly after our arrival. It made a great sensation amongst the people, whose curiosity was raised to the highest degree by flaming handbills, reciting the wonderful feats to be performed by "la hermosissima Jovena Catalina," "by the the most beautiful young Kitty," and the equally astonishing extravagances of the "eccentric clown Simon," all of which "the enlightened and *dignified* public of Leon" (thus ran the

invitation) were solicited to felicitate themselves by witnessing,—admittance two rials, niños (little ones) one rial, and niñitas (*very* little ones) a medio only. The following Sunday, at three o'clock, was the time fixed for the performance. We were all specially invited to attend by Señor Serrate in person, and of course accepted the invitation. Meantime the excitement became universal; it was as good as a revolution, and not half as dangerous. As the time approached, men marched through the streets, beating the rappel at the corners, which was the signal for gathering. The next thing to be seen was a swarm of servants, carrying chairs for their masters and mistresses; and then came the masters and mistresses themselves, in gala dress. I had not yet seen such an exhibition of satin slippers! We fell into the movement, and duly brought up at the house where the "Funambulos" or rope-dancers, had established themselves. It belonged to one of the most respectable citizens of Leon, who had patriotically permitted it to be used for this interesting occasion. Soldiers were stationed at the door to keep out the rabble, which blockaded the street, and devised all sorts of ingenious methods to get a glimpse of the mysteries within. Here the wife of Señor Serrate received the rials with a courtesy and "mil gracias" for each. The building had a large square court, shaded by high trees, and surrounded by a broad corridor, raised a foot or two above the ground. Upon one side of the courtyard was erected a temporary, carpeted stage, which extended out into the area. Behind this was a gaudily painted curtain, concealing the penetralia within which the performers were to retire after their respective efforts. Altogether it was not a bad substitute for a theatre. The corridor corresponded to the dress circle, the courtyard to the pit, and the roof to the gallery. But I am at a loss where to class the occupants of the trees! The place was already crowded when we arrived; the Chief of the State, the General, in fact all the principal inhabitants, comprising the

"beauty and fashion of Leon, and full two-thirds of all the padres, were present. All seemed at their ease, and, including the the ladies, smoked cigaritos. A seat was cleared for me by the side of the General, and the rest of our party took up their positions near by. The orchestra played with terrible energy, and some hens, perched amongst a lot of boys, in the trees, frightened at this unusual scene, cackled with equal vigor. The ground within the court was covered with muchachos, and nurses with children, who were wrought up to an alarming state of impatience, and only kept within the bounds of propriety by the canes of the vigilant alcaldes.

After an interval, a messenger approached the Director, and inquired if it was his pleasure the performance should begin; to which an affirmative response was given. The manager of the "Funambulos" then came forward and announced the "hermosissima Jovena Catalina," who would exhibit her dexterity on the tight rope. The next moment the Jovena advanced, and was, as the newspapers say, "rapturously received." She was dressed quite after the fashion of similar performers at home, in skirts equally brief, and seemed to me quite as dexterous. But she had monstrous ankles, and a foot none of the smallest, and was unmercifully criticised, particularly by the female spectators. "Mira!" exclaimed a belle by my side, who lifted her tiny hands in astonishment, "*Valgame Dios! es una pateza Inglesa!*" "See! Good Heavens! it is an English paw!" I glanced cautiously down at the little slippered feet at my side—they were really very small. My fair friend saw the movement, but nothing abashed, thrust them out the further, and rogueishly inquired, "How do you like them?" I professed to be looking for a fallen cigarito, but the dodge wouldn't answer. The Jovena, in a country where hardly any one who has his peculiarity escapes a nick-name, went afterwards by the unpoetical designation of "Tobillos gruesos"—"Big ankles!"

The Jovena had a sister, who was beautiful, and while she remained in the city, the reigning toast of the young officers and of the gallants generally. She however did not possess the skill of "Tobillos gruesos," but danced passably, and was very well in pantomime. The "eccentric clown, Simon," seemed to be the most popular feature of the exhibition; and although he was not always over-delicate, seldom failed to "bring down the house" by his hits. I was not long in discovering that the entire people had a keen appreciation of drollery, and what would perhaps be called "serious joking;" and have often witnessed impromptu scenes amongst the *mozos* by the roadside, or in the little villages, which were irresistibly comic, and saving time and place, might have been the originals from which Cervantes drew his immortal pictures.

After the performances on the rope, we had tumbling, in which two smart little boys, sons of the "director" of the Funambules, the clown, and a *woman* took part. But the Leonesas were shocked that one of the "bello sexo" should descend to that, and expressed their disapprobation in such a manner, that she never made her appearance again in the character of a "volteadora." Then came a pantomime, in which a fussy, gouty Englishman, travelling in Spain, and ignorant of the language, was the principal character. His mishaps created great merriment, and the raggedest boy in the *patio* seemed glad to have an opportunity of laughing at John Bull; who, as I have before said, is nowhere in the world more cordially hated than in Nicaragua.

It was quite sundown when Señor Serrate came forward and thanked his auditors for the honor of their attendance; and then the Jovena Catalina invited them all, in the choicest Castilian, to come again on the Sunday following. The "Funambulos," I may add, had a brilliant and profitable season of a month; and when they left, received a testimonial from the citizens, who "thought it worthy of remark, that

in this exhibition the public had not, as on other occasions, been driven to the hard necessity of listening to indecent dialogues, to the prejudice of morals and good taste, or of abstaining from visiting the exhibition." The "Correo del

STREET VIEW IN LEON—CALLE DE SAN JUAN

Istmo" also complimented them as having "performed with skill and excellence," and with these recommendations they departed on a tour of the State.

I have said, at the commencement of this chapter, that there were no stated amusements in Leon; perhaps, however, the various fiestas and saints' days should come under that denomination. At any rate they were celebrated in anything but a serious manner; they were general holidays,

in which everybody dressed in his best, and the more bombas fired and bells rung, the more "alegre" the occasion, and the greater the honor to the saints. As a consequence, being situated in the vicinity of the principal churches, we were treated to a "Fourth of July" as often as twice a week. Sometimes lines of bombas were arranged, not only around the churches, but on their roofs, and over their towers, with large ones at intervals, which, when they exploded, made a noise like a cannon. These were set off almost invariably in the daytime, and produced a deafening sound, like the rolling discharge of musketry under a cannonade, for nearly half an hour, creating a dense smoke, and filling the air with sulphurous odors. The bells were rung the while, and everybody seemed delighted, and none more so than the muchachos, who, like the *gamins de Paris*, swarmed everywhere, and were the foremost in all public demonstrations.

The fiesta of St. Andrew was celebrated with some novel features, and particularly commended itself to the muchachos. It was signalized by "un baile de los demonios," a dance of the devils. The devils were dressed in the most fantastic manner, wore masks, and sported barbed tails. One shrouded in black displayed a grinning death's head beneath his half-parted veil, and kept time to the music with a pair of veritable thigh bones. The dance, I should think, had been borrowed from the Indians: the music certainly was. It was almost unearthly, such as Cortez describes on the night of his retreat from Mexico, "which carried terror to the very souls of the Christians." It is impossible to describe the strange instruments. One consisted of a large calabash, over which was stretched the skin of some animal; this, when pressed in, recoiled with a dull, sullen noise, like the suppressed bellow of a wild beast, and the wail of some of the long reeds was like that of a man in the agonies of a violent death. The devils went whisking through the principal streets, followed by a gaping crowd, and entered all the prin-

cipal houses, where, after a dance in the courtyard, they expected either to receive a rial or two, or to be treated to a dram of agua ardiente. They favored me with an extra display of their demoniacal abilities,—but were high-spirited devils, and declined to receive money from a stranger.

Another class of dancers, dressed in a profusion of tinsel, but not aspiring to the distinction of devils, parade the streets on certain saints' days, visiting all the houses where the heads of the family bear the name of the saint, where they expect a gratuity or a treat, in return for an exhibition of their skill. As I soon lost all track of the saints, I do not remember which were supposed to be propitious to this kind of diversion.

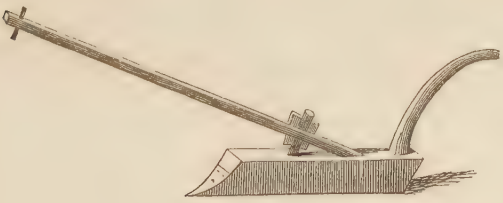
All-Saints' day was distinguished by a grand procession of all the saints, not excepting the little ebony San Benito, who, after airing themselves through the principal streets, visited the various churches in succession, including the Cathedral of Subtiaba, where there were some very curious and complicated ceremonies. The afternoon of this day was celebrated as a kind of carnival amongst the Indians of that municipality. It is their prerogative, on that occasion, to pelt all visitors with oranges, and to form rings of dancers around them, from which exit can only be procured by the payment of a certain sum to the church. Almost every one in the city went down, including the officers of State, whose position gave them no immunity,—on the contrary, they got more than their just share of the pelting. But as the visitors are usually mounted, a rapid retreat is always made, when the storm of the golden missiles grows too severe. I made it a point of duty to see everything, and accordingly rode to Subtiaba just before sunset, where the first object I saw was a venerable Doctor of Medicine, bareheaded, spurring at full speed, and dodging from side to side under a shower of oranges discharged upon him from an ambuscade. For it is considered a capital joke with the muchachos, to lie in

wait under a ruin, or amongst the bushes, and let off a volley upon the unsuspecting horseman. When I entered the plaza it was occupied by groups of people, moving from side to side, shouting and laughing, in a furor of excitement and frolic, while the air was full of missiles. A few were discharged at me, but as soon as I was recognized, I was exempted from the usual ordeal. Suddenly I saw a movement in the direction of the cabildo, and the next moment was saluted with "Vivan los Estados Unidos!" "Vivan los amigos de Nicaragua!" These were given with the greatest enthusiasm.[1]

Posts were planted around the plaza, to which a double line of bombas was attached. These were to be let off (for a wonder) after dark, and my friend Simon Roque was urgent that I should stay to witness the explosion, and even offered to anticipate the hour fixed for lighting them: but I had had enough of bombas for a lifetime, and rode home in the twilight. The streets were full of life, and the band stationed upon the steps of the grand Cathedral played

[1] On the day set apart for the festival of All Saints, the shops are closed and business suspended. About ten o'clock the procession commences from the Cathedral. A troop of military, marching to a slow tune, lead the way, and are followed by six of the finest Indian girls that can be procured, bearing large wax candles, and dressed in the ancient costumes of their tribes, accompanied by the great drum, carried on the back of an Indian, and beaten by two others. These are succeeded by men bearing on their shoulders wooden platforms, on which are placed images of saints. Other representations of beatified cardinals and bishops follow, escorted by angels with spreading wings. Then succeeds an immense statue of St. Peter, bearing the keys, and supported by angels on each side. Other images pass forward in succession, and immediately precede the Host, which is carried under a splendid canopy, and accompanied by the archbishop and the dignified clergy. The various orders of friars, the priests, and the collegiate students, in their robes, follow; and fresh images of saints and angels, with a new troop of military, bring up the rear. . . The setting out and return to the Cathedral are notified by frequent discharges of sky-rockets."—*Dunn's Guatemala*, p. 114.

the national anthem, while the soldiers grouped around the various "cuartels" joined in the chorus. For once, thanks to the darkness, I escaped the eternal presentation of arms and beat of drum, with which I was always received in the plaza, and which induced me to avoid entering it, except in cases of necessity. I sat on my horse for a quarter of an hour, listening to the music and the merriment, and speculated whether, after all, spite of unstable governments, and destitute of all those accessories which, according to our utilitarian ideas, are necessary to the popular welfare,—whether the people of Leon were not on the whole happier and more contented than those of any city of equal size in our own country? Here were no crowded workshops, where youth and age toil on, on, during the long day and by the pale gas light, amidst foul vapors, or in a corrupted atmosphere, that trade may thrive, and arrogant commerce strut in the Exchange! No thundering machines to disturb the calm of evening, to drown the murmurs of the night winds and the gentle melody of the falling dews, with their hoarse, unearthly clangor!



NICARAGUAN PLOUGH.

CHAPTER XIII.

A SORTIE FROM LEON—QUESALGUAQUE—EL ESTERO DE DONA PAULA—THE "MONTE DE SAN JUAN"—SUMMARY WAY OF DISPOSING OF "LADRONES"—"EL TIGRE," JAGUAR, OR OUNCE; ITS HABITS; HOW HUNTED—THE "LEON," OR PUMA—THE "COYOTE"—POSULTEGA—A SPECIMEN PADRE—SOBRINAS—CHICHIGALPA—POISED THUNDER-STORM—THE ORACION—HACIENDA OF SAN ANTONIO—CHINANDEGA—A CHALLENGE—EL VIEJO—FAMILIAR FIXTURES—AN ENTERPRISING CITIZEN AND HIS TRAGIC FATE—A DECAYING TOWN—MULES *vs.* HORSES—VISIT TO THE HACIENDAS—AN INDIGO ESTATE, AND A MAYORDOMO—FINE VIEW—THE SUGAR ESTATE OF SAN GERONIMO—BACHELOR QUARTERS AND HACIENDA LIFE—A FRUIT GARDEN—THE BREAD FRUIT—SUGAR-MILLS, AND THE MANUFACTURE OF AGUARDIENTE—A SINFUL SIESTA—VISIT FROM THE MUNICIPALITY—"UNA CANCION"—CHINANDEGA BY DAYLIGHT—REALEJO—PORT AND HARBOR—THE PROGRESS OF ENTERPRISE—THE PROJECTED NEW TOWN OF CORINTH—RETURN TO LEON.

EARLY after our arrival in Leon, amongst many others of like character, we had received an invitation from the wealthy and influential family of Venerio, to spend a week at their establishment in Viejo Chinandega; which, as it was coupled with a promise to give us an initiation into the mysteries of hacienda life, we had at once accepted. Up to this time, however (Sept. 3, 1849), I had been unable to leave the capital. But now my official negotiations were happily terminated, and pending the action of the Legislative Chambers, which were called to meet on the 22d of the same month, I had an opportunity of seeing something more of the magnificent plain, in the centre of which we were residing.

I have already said that, for obvious reasons, most of the travelling in Central America is done in the morning or

evening. It was four o'clock in the afternoon, therefore, when we started for El Viejo, twelve leagues, or thirty-six miles distant. This, with us, would be considered quite a day's journey in itself, but here it is what is called an evening "paseo," or ride. Our course led through Subtiaba, crossing the stream which flows past that pueblo at a place where art had cut down the steep banks, and nature woven an evergreen roof above—one of those dark, cool nooks in which the water birds love to gather, and where the Indian girls come to bathe—beyond which spread out the luxuriant maize fields, traversed by hedge rows like the lines on a chess board. The road, bordered with trees, to protect the traveller from the sun, wound amongst these fields for five or six miles, when it entered the forest again, and soon came to a deep ravine, with abrupt banks, seventy or eighty feet high, at the bottom of which flows a large clear stream, called, at this point, Quesalguaque. It rises near the volcano of Telica, and for some distance from its source it bears the name of Rio Telica. It flows into the harbor of Realejo, and for a number of leagues from its mouth, is a tide-water stream, and called "El Estero de Doña Paula."

This is the largest stream on the plain of Leon, and is probably that to which some map-makers have given the name of Rio Tosta. The cart-road descends the ravine circuitously, and ascends in like manner; traversing nearly a mile in passing from one bank to the other. The mule-road, however, is direct, but the descent and ascent are both abrupt and difficult. I hardly thought either possible, and was really amazed to find my horse attempt them without so much as the touch of the spur, and quite as a matter of course. Emerging from the ravine, we came to some cleared fields, (one of which was planted with pine-apples, now nearly ripe, and looking wonderfully tempting in the sun), in the midst of which was a small collection of huts, called the Pueblecita de Quesalguaque. We stopped for a moment

to fill our pockets with delicious *nisperos* from a tree overhanging the road, its treasures free to all who chose "to come and eat," and then diverging from the camino real, struck into the narrow mule-path which leads through the Monte de San Juan. This portion of the road has a bad reputation throughout the whole country; and during the late troubles had been the scene of several tragic occurrences. The robbers or ladrones who infested it, however, had been hunted by volunteers from Leon and Chinendaga, and shot down like wild beasts; a summary, but most effectual way of preventing further depredations. At one point we passed a number of newly-erected crosses, marking the place where murder had been done. But all was still and peaceful now, and we saw nothing to startle us except a *Tigre*, which leaped across the path a few paces in advance, disappearing instantaneously in the forest.

What is here called the Tigre or Tiger, is the true *Jaguar*, or *Ounce;* and the animal which is called the *Lion* is the maneless Mexican Lion, or Puma. Ounces are abundant throughout the entire country, and often commit serious depredations upon the cattle of the haciendas. They are of a tawny color, the body beautifully variegated with irregular oblong black spots, breast and belly whitish. They grow to the length of four or five feet, are powerfully built, with massive jaws, and possess a strength and activity superior to any of the feline race of equal size. They unhesitatingly attack all animals, of whatever proportions, which are not fully capable of defending themselves; and in riding through the woods I have several times seen full grown heifers, which they had not only killed, but dragged to considerable distances,—in one instance not less than a hundred yards.

The Tigre, however, sometimes meets his match in a sturdy bull or spirited cow, and is compelled to retreat. The vaqueros of the haciendas, who are fluent on the subject of tigers, and often able to show ghastly scars in confirmation

of their stories of adventures, relate instances in which the tiger has been killed outright in his encounters with the *toros*. A bull of venerable aspect, but exceedingly mild demeanor, was pointed out to me in Honduras, which was the hero of many battles, successful in all, and in three instances killing his adversary. I quite respected this protector of his herd, and thought he should at least receive the title of the "Great Defender." The herdsmen concur in saying that the tiger is generally too cunning to attack the cattle, except singly, when separated from each other, as they all make common cause against him when he ventures amongst the herd. The ounce seldom attacks man, unless pressed by hunger, or by the hunters. This is a fortunate circumstance; for otherwise travelling in Central America, where, in the secluded parts of the country, hardly a day passes without seeing one or two of them, would be attended with the greatest danger. In some localities, however, the ounce is represented to be more ferocious than in others, and so bold as to slip into the villages in broad daylight, in search of his prey. There are many men distinguished for success in hunting this animal, who arrogate to themselves the title of *tigreros*. They use no arms, except a long and stout spear or lance, and their machetes. Their first object, with the aid of dogs, is to drive the tiger into a tree, or bring him to bay. When this is done, the tigrero wraps his poncho around his left arm, and approaches the fierce and excited animal, with his lance so fixed as to be able to receive him on its point when he shall make his spring. This requires great coolness and firmness, for everything depends upon the hunter planting his spear full in the animal's breast. If this be not done, a terrible fight ensues, from which the strongest and bravest man is fortunate if he escapes with life. The genuine tigrero scorns to use firearms,—"no tiene valor, nada," they are of no use, none! Some of these men number their victories by scores, and are considered invincible.

The *tigre negro*, or black ounce, is erroneously regarded by the natives as a distinct species; and, perhaps from his more forbidding appearance, is supposed to be stronger and fiercer. They are undoubtedly a little larger in size than the other variety. In Nicaragua they are rarely seen, but are quite abundant, it is said, in the mountainous districts of Honduras.

The Lion, or Puma, notwithstanding his name, has fewer of the traditional magnanimous traits of the lion proper than the tigre. He is altogether a sneaking fellow, and attacks cattle only when he finds them wounded, entangled in thickets, or embarrassed in swamps, where he has everything to his own advantage. He flies from man, but will prowl stealthily after him in the evening, like the wolf. He is consequently approached with difficulty, and rarely killed. His color is a pale, brownish red, inclining to black on the back, but light under the belly. In shape he is slenderer than the ounce, his legs and tail longer, and his claws and head slighter. "A full grown tiger," said an old hunter to me, "is a match for half a dozen of the cowards." The weary traveller, sleeping in the forest, has more to dread from the puma than any other wild animal. Besides the ounce and the puma, there are several varieties of tiger, or mountain cats, which commit depredations on the fowls and smaller domestic animals of the ranchos, but from whom man has nothing to fear.

The "coyote," wild dog, or as he is sometimes called, wolf, is common in some parts of Central America. I never saw any of them, but they are said to differ as widely from the true wolf as from the common dog. Some have conjectured that they are descended from the bloodhounds which were used by the early Spaniards in hunting down the natives. But all attempts to reclaim them, although carried on during two or three generations, have failed. Like wolves, they generally hunt in packs, making no noise beyond a low

howl, and follow their prey with a perseverance which is almost always successful in the end. It is said that, although individually arrant cowards, they will collectively attack the tiger himself, drive him into a tree, and besiege him for many days, until exhausted, in attempting to escape, he falls a victim to the number of his assailants. The natives have a singular notion, however, that the coyotes never beleaguer the tigre unless he has committed some outrage on the fraternity, robbed them of their prey, or made a meal of some straggler.

To return from this digression. Two leagues beyond Quesalguaque, the intervening country level and magnificently wooded, and the road broad and smooth, is the Pueblo of Posultega, an unpretending town of some five or six hundred inhabitants, and distinguished for nothing except an ancient church, more remarkable for its dilapidation than its architecture. The cura, who had called on me in Leon a few days before, was swinging in his hammock, between a couple of orange trees in front of his house; he leaped up as we approached, stopped me in the open street, and gave me an embrace "as was an embrace," and from my elevated position on my horse, quite too near the belt to be comfortable. He insisted on our stopping for the rest of the afternoon and for the night at his poor house, (every house in Central America is called "*mi pobre casa*" by its owner), which I declined doing with a prodigious affectation of regret, that became real a moment after, when I discovered the padre's *sobrina* or niece, a fair, full-breasted girl, peeping slyly out between the bars of the window. Of course it is not reputable for padres to have females in their establishments, except near relatives,—aunts for housekeepers, and nieces for——companions! The aunts, I observed, were always old, but the nieces almost invariably young and pretty, as nieces are bound to be.

The country, from Posultega to Chichigalpa, a consider-

CHICHIGALPA.

able town, two leagues further on, preserves its flat surface, the monotony but slightly relieved by the occasional narrow and shallow channels which carry off the superabundant water of the rainy season. Chichigalpa, formerly a very large Indian town, still numbers from three to five thousand inhabitants; it is regularly laid out, and has a neat and attractive appearance. It was just sunset when we entered its streets. A heavy thunder-storm was piling up its black volumes behind the volcanoes in the east, and the calm and silence which precede the tempest rested upon the plain; the winds were still, and the leaves hung motionless on the trees. The adult inhabitants seemed to sympathize with the scene, and sat silently in the open doorways; but the children were as playful and noisy as ever, their voices rendered doubly distinct, and almost unnatural in the pervading quiet. Suddenly the bell of the oracion struck; the careless voices of the children were instantaneously hushed, and we mechanically stopped our horses, and uncovered our heads. A low murmur of prayer floated forth on the undulating waves of sound which seemed to subside in circles around us;—again the bell struck, again, and then, when the pulses had almost ceased to beat, that the straining ear might catch the expiring vibrations, rolled in the muffled sound of the distant thunder. It came down from the mountains with the majesty of an ocean poured along their trembling sides!

The oracion, which never fails to impress the most careless traveller with a feeling of reverential awe, was but one element in this grand combination of the solemn and the sublime.

We rode through Chichigalpa without stopping, and pressed rapidly forward, with the design of reaching the estate of San Antonio, belonging to the family of my companion, before the storm should overtake us. Darkness, however, closed speedily around our path, and in ten minutes we were unable to discover our position, except as it

was revealed to us by the lightning, which occasionally poured in lurid, blinding sheets, from the summits of the volcanoes, where the storm seemed to pause as if to concentrate its gloomy squadrons, before moving down upon the silent plain, and forth upon the dark Pacific. Fortunately the road was wide, and permitted us to ride rapidly, without any great danger from the projecting branches. We reached San Antonio, eight miles from Chichigalpa, in an hour.

The resident on the estate was an uncle of my companion, an amiable and gentlemanly person, who apologized for not coming to the door to receive us. His apology was a valid one. He had led the hunt after the ladrones who had infested the road to Leon, and had received a ball in his hip, in the final encounter with them. We were at once offered a cup of chocolate, which we accepted, in deference not less to our own tastes than to a sensible practice of the country, which is always to take whatever is tendered to you. Thus a caballero is offered a cigar; he at once accepts it with a bow, or "mil gracias," a thousand thanks, and if he does not care to smoke, puts it in his pocket. This will occur during the same sitting as often as the cigars are passed. With chocolate the case is a little different; it is not easily put in one's pocket, and is therefore otherwise disposed of. The house at San Antonio, I observed as soon as I entered it, was superior to any of the hacienda residences which had yet fallen under my notice. It was not only well constructed, but conveniently arranged, and painted in the interior. It had been built by a Mr. Bridge, an Englishman, who had established here one of the finest sugar plantations in the country. In common with most of the English residents, he had married a woman of the country, and what with trade, his hacienda, and an English vessel-of-war, always conveniently at hand to enforce any claim which he and his English brethren might find it profitable to set up against the government, had contrived to amass a considerable fortune.

Upon his death, however, the estate had been sold to its present proprietors, and although it had fallen somewhat out of repair, it still showed what might be accomplished in this favored land, with a very moderate share of enterprise and industry.

The wind had sprung up, and carried the impending storm off to the southward; so, after waiting half an hour at San Antonio, we again mounted and pursued our course. By the dim, reviving light, I could make out that we were now in an open and highly cultivated country, sprinkled over with houses. Half an hour more brought us to the suburbs of Chinandega, probably the most flourishing town in the State, and the only one, I believe, which has increased in population since the independence. The commerce of Realejo is conducted through it; here nearly all the merchants reside; and the inhabitants, some fifteen or sixteen thousand in number, are conceded to be the most industrious and thriving of any in the Republic.

It was too dark to distinguish anything beyond long, broad avenues, bordered with gardens, each one having a hut in the centre. The streets really seemed endless, and we passed square on square, for full a mile and a half, before we reached the paved streets surrounding the plazas, where the adobe and tile-roofed houses are built, and where the wealth and trade is concentrated. The people were still sitting at their doors and windows, in luxurious enjoyment of the cool breeze which the passing storm had evoked somewhere beyond the mountains. We would have ridden directly through the plaza, but were stopped by the sudden ring of a musket on the pavement, and a fierce order to halt and give the countersign. We did so, and then supposed we might go on. But the sentinel demanded that we should advance singly, and called to the officer of the guard. Finding that we should probably be detained for an indefinite period, I whispered to my companion to fall back, and avoid

the plaza by making a circuit around it. He did so, muttering something about the stupid military, which might have cost him dear had it been overheard. A long detour brought us to the other side of the town, which is bounded by a considerable stream, flowing through a deep hollow. The path to the water was broad, and artificially graded, so, notwithstanding the darkness, we passed without difficulty. We were now in the plain road to El Viejo, and a brisk ride through the intermediate fields and the silent suburbs, brought us to a large house, fronting on the plaza. We stopped before a high and imposing portal, the massive gates of which parted in answer to the well known voice of my companion. In another instant we were beneath the trees in the courtyard, in the full blaze of hospitable lights, streaming through the open doors of the grand sala, where our friends were awaiting our arrival.

Upon entering the house, I was surprised to find myself surrounded by nearly all the well-known furniture of a parlor in New York. Here were sofas and rocking-chairs, and mirrors and clocks, of familiar fashion, holding something more than their own against hammocks and hide-bottomed *sillas*. A portrait of Washington and a fac-simile of the Declaration of Independence were suspended against the walls, and a bust of Shakspeare filled a vacant place on a little shelf in a distant corner. A clear blue eye, a rosy cheek, and the pleasant sound of our native tongue were alone needed to complete an illusion, in which the full form, the classic profile, pale complexion, large and liquid eyes, the stately grace, and low but cordial welcome of the mistress of the mansion, did not permit me to indulge.

I have said that the family whose hospitable courtesies I was now enjoying, was one of the wealthiest, and socially one of the most influential in the country. Yet its history for the past fifteen or twenty years is unfortunately too truthful an illustration of what the condition of the country

has been during that disastrous period. Don Gregorio Venerio, the late head of the family, was one of the few men which Central America has afforded, possessing enterprise, a liberal and enlightened spirit, and that sound philosophy which consists in a practical disposition to make the best of existing circumstances. Overcoming most of the narrow prejudices which had grown up under the rigorous colonial system of Spain, and which fettered the mass of the people for a long time after the independence, he introduced improvements in agriculture, new machinery in the manufacture of sugar, and the preparation of cotton and indigo for foreign markets, and with a true patriotism and public spirit sought to direct the general attention to useful occupations and the development of the natural resources of the country, as the best means of insuring civil order and stability in government. His labors were, for a time, eminently successful, and he gave an impulse to industry and trade in the section of the state in which he resided, which has since doubled its wealth and influence. But envious and evil disposed persons were not wanting to misrepresent his motives, and to awaken distrust of the objects which he aimed to accomplish. The hostility of the ignorant masses was excited against him and his family; his machinery, it was said, would depreciate wages, and his products destroy the market for the productions of smaller proprietors. The ultimate result may be anticipated. The robber chieftain, Somoza, whose violent end I have already recounted, at the head of a band of assassins and robbers, entered his house at night, dragged him from his bed, and butchered him in cold blood, in the presence of his entire family, in the very room where I was now seated. Yet, up to the time of my arrival, the murderer had escaped apprehension and defied justice.

El Viejo Chinandega, Old Chinandega, or as it is briefly called El Viejo, is one of the most ancient towns in Nicaragua. It is beautifully situated upon a stream which flows

through its centre, and contains between five and six thousand inhabitants. Formerly it was the principal town, next to Leon, in this department, and was the seat of the trade carried on through the port of Realejo. But the new town is located more favorably for commerce, and as that has increased in importance, El Viejo has declined. During the supremacy of the bucaneers in the South Sea, El Viejo was several times attacked, and once or twice burned. It has a large church, of high antiquity, situated upon an artificial terrace in the midst of a plaza. A fantastic wall runs along the edge of the terrace, and above each flight of steps, by which it is ascended, are lofty arches of fine proportions, which lend a very singular effect to the whole structure. Architecturally, El Viejo affords no other object of interest.

After breakfast, on the morning following our arrival, we started on a visit to the haciendas, or plantations, belonging to the family. I had a strong prejudice against mules, but my host quietly insisted that I should ride his *macho*, a sleek-looking, clean-limbed animal, upon which my saddle had already been placed. I complied without, at the moment, fully comprehending the reason of the request. But no sooner had we struck into the main road, than I found that, in respect of speed and of ease to the rider, no horse was comparable to the splendid animal upon which I was mounted. Without an apparent effort, and quite as a matter of course, he distanced all the horses of the party, and at what appeared to be his ordinary pace, kept them at a sharp gallop. "That macho," said my host, "cost me three hundred dollars; and I have ridden him sixty miles in six consecutive hours!" When I add that ordinary mules here cost only about twenty dollars, and that this one was valued at three hundred and fifty, the difference between them is brought to some standard of calculation. The pace is artificial; and when what is called "a good education" is joined to good proportions, soundness of limb, and high spirit, (for they

differ widely in this respect,) mules are esteemed infinitely higher than horses. Their endurance is incredible, and they have the ability to take care of themselves where a horse would starve.

At the distance of a league from the town, we turned into a beautiful shaded lane, or avenue, running through the broad estates which we had come to visit. The fields, with the exception of one or two which were planted with maize, were overgrown with weeds. I inquired the cause, and was told that these were indigo grounds, the cultivation of which had been suspended from the impossibility of securing permanent laborers; for the processes in manufacturing the indigo are so delicate, that any deficiency in attention ruins the entire crop. When affairs became fully settled, it was intended to resume the cultivation of this valuable product; but until then, the ground, dams, vats, and machinery were valueless property. In the centre of this portion of the estate, on an eminence near an artificial pond covered with water plants, and constructed for supplying the indigo works, was the house of the superintendent,—a large two-story edifice, with a double corridor on every side, and surrounded by a little forest of magnificent trees, relieved by towering palms and the green columns of the cactus. The mayordomo, a venerable old man with his head bound in a variegated handkerchief, white shirt and breeches, and red shoes, himself one of the fixtures of the estate, received each of us with a hearty embrace, and then led us up a flight of broad stone steps, to the upper corridor. Here were the old man's daughters, three pretty, blushing girls, who were introduced individually as Paula, Manuelita, and Concepcion. "Their mother is a saint," said he, as he gazed on them with an expression of pride; "but happier times are coming for our poor country, and they will live to see them, I am sure!" and he tottered off, to procure "alguna fresca."

From the corridor we enjoyed a magnificent view of field

and forest, stretching away in billows of verdure to the base of the volcano of El Viejo, lifting its purple summit to mid-heaven, beyond and over all. I ventured to imagine the intervening plain in the hands of an enterprising and vigorous people, dotted over with villages, and loaded down with the richest products of all-bountiful Nature, and queried if this generation might not witness the change. Let the babbler about impossibilities, in this first decade of the last half of the nineteenth century, turn his eyes to the shores of the Bay of San Francisco, be silent, and mark the reality!

From the indigo estate, bearing the name of some favorite saint, which I have forgotten, we rode a mile or two further, to the sugar plantation of San Geronimo. The ground which it occupies is perfectly level, and by means of ditches, designed particularly for purposes of irrigation, is laid out in squares, or manzanas. The cane on some of these squares had been newly planted, and on others lately cut, while upon others it was now in perfection, and ready for use. The mills are here kept running steadily the year round, and by the time the cutters have gone through all the fields, those which were first cleared are ready for the knife a second time. Under favorable circumstances, three crops can be taken yearly; and the ground does not require to be replanted oftener than once in ten or fourteen years.

A two-story house, newer and better built than that which I have already described, stood upon one side of the cane-fields, on the banks of a stream, and in the vicinity of the mills. It was approached by a broad avenue, kept scrupulously clean, and its white walls and red roof stood out against a dense background of trees, now in the perfection of their foliage, and loaded with fruit. The lower story was occupied by the mayor-domo and his family, and the upper by a bachelor brother of our host, whom we found in his shirt sleeves, swinging in a hammock suspended in the corridor on the shaded side of the building, and engaged in

reading a translation of Sue's Mysteries of Paris! He rose hastily, uttered some indistinct apologies, and led us into the body of the building, where in an instant we were surrounded by a playful troop of blooded dogs, which our friend, who was a good deal of a Nimrod, had expressly imported from England and the United States. In one corner of the room stood an elegant rifle, with a brace of pistols, a sword, and a variety of bits and spurs grouped around it. In another corner was a guitar and a saddle, and on the table, in that delightful confusion seen only in bachelor establishments, a flute, some music, and books, and an infinity of cigars. An engraved portrait of Lola Montez was the only decoration on the walls, unless the skin of a monstrous tigre, stretched at one end of the apartment, might be called a decoration.

From the corridor, the eye traversed broad fields of cane, framed in by a dense forest, the view opening only towards the east, where the perspective of fields terminated, in the distance, with the tiled roof of the house belonging to the indigo estate, but half seen amidst the surrounding trees. A creaking cart came up the broad avenue towards us, loaded with stalks of the *caña*, which were piled in heaps in front of the mills situated in the valley of the stream, and partially concealed by the vapors rising lazily from the boiling kettles in which the juice was evaporated. The mozos engaged in the various processes moved about with a slow and careless air, in perfect harmony with the general quiet of the scenery, and in unison with the monotonous clatter of the mill, which seemed to be half asleep, and just about to stop altogether. I sat down in a vacant hammock, and for the first time fully comprehended the charms of hacienda life,—that aimless, dreamy existence, undisturbed by ambition or envy, and separated from the struggle of conflicting interests. Our bachelor friend vegetated here month after month, without a wish ungratified, making the most of the present, and careless of the future. Occasionally, he said,

his slumbering energies would be roused for a moment, but lacking legitimate objects to occupy them, soon subsided again, and the stream of life flowed on as before. A turn with his dogs in the morning, a stroll of supervision through the mills, chocolate, a book, the hammock, and the siesta,—these, with now and then a ride to the village, or on extraordinary occasions a rapid descent of a single day on Leon, made up the sum of life.

Connected with this estate was a "huerta de las fruitas," a fruit garden, upon which the late Don Gregorio had expended a great deal of money and care. It covered several acres of ground,—a wilderness of oranges and lemons, white and yellow pine apples, melons, mamays, marañons, jocotes, limes, citrons, guavas, tamarinds,—in short all the innumerable varieties of tropical fruits and flowers, traversed by broad walks, here a vista terminating in a bower, and there ending with a glimpse of the deep pools of the neighboring stream; the whole surrounded by an evergreen hedge of cactuses, in full bloom, and loading the air with fragrance. Here was the odorous sweet lemon, and in the centre of the garden a group of bread-fruit trees, remarkable for their broad, deep green leaves, amongst which might be discerned the nuts, looking for all the world like the heads of young darkies. These trees had been introduced by Don Gregorio from the Sandwich Islands, and flourished quite as luxuriantly as in their native soil. But the fruit did not "take" with the Nicaraguenses, who preferred the tortilla and the plantain; the tree is therefore propagated solely from motives of curiosity.

From the garden we went to the mills. The machinery in use had all been imported from England and the United States, via Cape Horn. There was first the crushing or grinding mill, from which a copper conductor carried the juice through a strainer into a vat, communicating by means of tubes with the coppers or cauldrons. From these, when

the reduction and clarification were sufficiently far advanced, the liquid was drawn off into other coppers, whence the scum was constantly removed, and thrown into a large trough, to be used in the distillation of *aguardiente*. When reduced to a certain strength or thickness, the sugar was transferred to the coolers and strainers, where the graining took place, and the molasses was separated. A large portion of the sugar is not subjected to this process, but while in its crude state, is laded into moulds of a certain size, forming what is called *chancaca*, sold for ordinary consumption amongst the poorer classes, at a *quartillo* (three cents) the cake, equivalent to about one cent and a half the pound. The finer qualities of sugar produced on this estate are nearly as white and hard as the refined sugars of commerce. Connected with these works is a complete apparatus for distilling *aguardiente*, capable of an indefinite production of that article of consumption. But this is a government *estanco*, or monopoly, and it cannot be manufactured on private account. The fact that the late Don Gregorio had obtained the contract for supplying the government, was one of the causes of hostility to him amongst the smaller proprietors, whose rude but costly modes of distillation were entirely supplanted by the introduction of his improved machinery. This hostility had not yet died out, and the family meditated throwing up the contract, and discontinuing the manufacture altogether, as the easiest mode of relieving themselves from the popular odium which it excited. We can hardly understand how such prejudices should exist, but it is nevertheless a fact that, at the first, every improvement in the useful arts, all social progress, and every advance in government, philosophy, and religion, have the world over been met and opposed in precisely the same spirit, and from precisely the same motives.

Upon our return to the house, we found a table spread with the rarest collection of tropical fruits and luxuries which I had yet seen, and which might have excited the

envy of a king. We had "frescas" compounded from the marañon, the orange, and the juice of the cocoanut, slightly dashed with aguardiente, the coolest and most refreshing imaginable; and melons—such melons! And when we came to lie down in our respective hammocks, beneath the shaded corridor, for the afternoon siesta, it was unanimously voted that, with our present limited information on the subject of Paradise, we should be quite willing to accept perpetual youth and hacienda life "*donde*," rather than incur the risk of attaining the former! "Opinions may differ about the propriety of confessing it," said W., "but really," and he took a long and lazy pull at his cigar, "I think this is quite good enough for a miserable sinner like myself!"

The smoke wreathed slowly up from each hammock, the mill clattered drowsily, and we slept until the cool evening wind, gathering strength as the sun declined, began to rustle amongst the orange trees which grew beside the corridor, and the creaking carts, which had stood idle during the heat of the day, again began to move in the direction of the cane fields. A hacienda dinner, and a cheery ride townward, in the twilight, completed the day: and we went to bed that night, with a most satisfactory conception of hacienda life.

I had flattered myself that my visit to El Viejo was unknown beyond the family with which we were stopping; I had, in fact, stipulated with our host, that our incognito should be rigidly preserved. He was, therefore, a good deal embarrassed, and I was not a little annoyed, when he announced the next morning at breakfast, that the municipality of the town had been there, before I was up, to say that they should do themselves the honor to pay their respects to "El Ministro" in form, at the early hour of ten o'clock. There was now no alternative but to submit to the arrangement, and make the best of what we would gladly have prevented. Punctual to the moment, when the clock struck the appoint-

ed hour, a band of musicos, preceded by half a dozen fellows firing bombas, emerged from the cabildo, on the opposite side of the square, in the direction of our house. They were followed by the municipal and spiritual fathers of the town, the former with their red sashes and gold-headed canes, and the latter in their black robes and broad-brimmed hats, after whom came a mingled mass of men, women, and children. The musicos played with an energy befitting the occasion, and the men with the bombas managed to keep up an incessant discharge. The musicos, the municipality, and the priests, with a very select few of the prominent citizens, alone entered the sala. The populace had to content themselves with gazing in turns through the open windows and doors. Amongst the ecclesiastics was the Dean Remijo Salazar, one of the most imposing men in appearance, and most accomplished in manner and in education, of any in the country, and withal an orator and a philanthropist, and the venerable Padre Jose Maria Guerrero, distinguished throughout the State for his exemplary piety, and noted as a musician and a composer of music. I experienced a real satisfaction in taking these men by the hand, and my subsequent acquaintance with them only served to deepen my respect and esteem. After the exchange of salutations, and a very neat welcome from the first alcalde, we were told that the musicos were prepared with a "Cancion," composed expressly for this occasion, which they begged permission to sing. The permission, accompanied with a glass of ardiente by way of clearing their respective whistles, was graciously accorded. It was but seven stanzas in length, but each stanza was seven times repeated, with a constantly increasing nasal intonation, until the sweat rolled down the faces of singers and players,—for each musico both sang and played. The infliction was severe, and would have been unendurable, had it not been for the amusing contortions of features, and strong muscular exercises of the performers, which far sur-

passed the most extravagant pantomime ever brought on the stage. A copy of the "Cancion" was handed to me at the conclusion of the performance, of which the title and a couple of stanzas will suffice to satisfy any curiosity which the reader may entertain in respect to it. I could not learn who was the author; for, with the modesty of true genius, he carefully concealed his name.

"CANCION.

"Con que la Municipalidad de la Villa del Viejo, en union de los Senores Presbiterios Don Remijio Salazar, Dean de la Santa Yglecia Cathedral, y Dr. Don Jose Maria Guerrero, y Licenciado D. Evaristo Rocha, felicitaron al Senor Ministro Plenopotencario de los Estados Unidos del Norte, en su legada a esta Villa, el 5 a Setiembre, de 1849.

"Digno hijo de Washington,
Seais bien venido,
Illustre bien hechor
De nuestro Istmo,
No hay recompensa
Que eguale al beneficio,
De Vuestra Empresa!

"Fue la America libre,
Hoy in su Centro,
Con Vos. se regocije
Hasta el estremo,
Es un deber
Pues que por Vos. adquiere
Un nuevo ser.

"Dichoso aquel momento
Bello, y deseado,
En que Vuestra Excelencia
Fue proclamado,
Para operar
La obra grande que el mundo
Debe admirar."

We remained but two days at El Viejo, and on the morning of the third started on our return to Leon. Chinandega,

by daylight, more than confirmed the favorable opinion which I had formed of it from descriptions and starlight glimpses. It covers a very large space of ground, and is regularly laid out in "cuadras" or squares, which are again subdivided into what can best be described as gardens, each

VIEW OF CHINANDEGA FROM THE WEST.

one embowering a dwelling of some kind, generally built of canes and thatched, but often of adobes and neatly roofed with tiles. The central, or what may be called the business part of the town, in the vicinity of the grand plaza, is compact, and as well built as any part of Leon or Granada. Yet it is scarcely twenty years since there was but a single tile-roofed house in the town. Altogether, Chinandega has an air of thrift and enterprise which I have seen nowhere else in Central America; and as the trade now springing up on

the Pacific coast increases, its importance will continue to augment. The country around it is flat, yet the soil is dry, and although the heat during the day is considerable, yet here, as in El Viejo, the evenings and nights are cool and pleasant. This is perhaps due to its position in respect both to the sea and the great volcano of El Viejo, which stands guard at this extremity of the plain of Leon.

Realejo is about two leagues distant from Chinandega. It is a small town, situated upon a tide-water stream, full five miles from the harbor proper, and can only be reached by the ordinary bongos or lighters, at high water. The position is low, and is reputed unhealthy. The customs' establishment is located there, but the merchants who conduct their trade through the port have their stores in Chinandega and Leon. It is said that the town was originally built nearer the harbor, and that the present site was afterwards adopted in consequence of the frequent attacks of the pirates, who, as I have already observed, infested this coast. The population of Realejo is about twelve hundred, who find employment in loading and unloading vessels, and supplying them with fruits and provisions. Recently the place has derived a great impulse from the Californian trade; docks and warehouses have been built, depôts for coal established, and several of the American steamers now touch there regularly for supplies; the station, in this respect, being favorably situated intermediately between Panama and Acapulco. It seems likely, however, that the old town will be abandoned and a new one built up, immediately on the harbor, opposite the anchorage, where there is a fine position, adapted to all the wants of commerce. A road has, in fact, lately been opened to the mouth of the Estero Doña Paula, by a company of native merchants, and the site of the new town has already been laid out under direction of the government. It is to bear the classical name of "Corinth," and will not be distant more than eighteen or twenty miles from Leon, to

which place it is supposed it will sustain the same relation that Realejo has hitherto done to Chinandega. The official paper, the "Correo del Istmo," of the 30th of January last, advertises four hundred and twenty of the lots in "Corinth," varying from 1000 to 1500 square yards, and the minimum prices at which they are to be sold, i. e. from $25 to $37. There seems to be little doubt that this enterprise will prove successful, and that the Port of Realejo will become second in importance to no other on the entire Pacific coast from Panama northward.[1]

[1] Sir Edward Belcher, R. N., who surveyed this harbor in 1838, says: "The island of Cardon, at the mouth of the harbor of Realejo, is situated in 12° 28′ N., and 87° 12′ W. It has two entrances, both of which are safe, under proper precautions, in all weathers. Good and safe anchorage extends for several miles. The rise and fall of the tide is eleven feet, full and change 3h. 6m. Docks or slips, therefore, may easily be constructed, and timber is readily to be procured of any dimensions; wood, water, and immediate necessaries are plentiful and cheap.—" *Voyage round the World*," vol. ii. p. 307.

"I may confidently say," observes Dunlap, "that Realejo is as good a port as any in the known world. I have seen Portsmouth, Rio Janeiro, Port Jackson, Talhujano, Callao and Guayaquil, and to all of these I consider it decidedly superior. It is a salt water creek, into which several small streams of water empty themselves. The entrance is protected by an island about two miles long, which leaves at each end a channel where ships can enter the harbor, but extending opposite the main land, forming the port in such a manner as to protect it entirely from any wind that can possibly blow, and also breaking the swell which enters the outer bay of of Conchagua from the ocean. The north entrance is about a quarter of a mile wide, and that at the south of the island rather wider—both being entirely free from rocks or hidden dangers, and having in no part less than five fathoms depth of water. At one of these openings vessels can at all times enter with a leading wind, from whatever quarter it may blow. The inside consists of a noble basin of water, nowhere less than four fathoms deep, with a bottom of mud, where two hundred ships of the line might lie at all times in most perfect security. Merchant vessels generally lie about a mile from the entrance, in the branch of the creek which runs up to Realejo, where there are about five fathoms of water over a

The opening of the port of San Juan del Sur, or San Juan de Concordia, for purposes of transit across the Continent via Lake Nicaragua and the Rio San Juan, it has been supposed will seriously affect the importance of Realejo. The port of San Juan del Sur, however, can never meet the requirements of a considerable commerce. As a point of embarkation and disembarkation for steamers, it is unobjectionable: but it is small, and it is almost impossible for sail vessels to approach this part of the Nicaraguan coast. The north-east trade winds, which blow the entire year, here sweep across the whole continent, and for a considerable distance, and almost constantly, off the shore; where, meeting with other currents, they form those peculiar, revolving, contradictory winds known as Papagayos, which give their name to the Gulf within which this port is situated.[1] Realejo, from this circumstance, and that of position in respect to the back country, must therefore remain the chief port of Nicaragua. It is undoubtedly the best for harbor purposes.

[1] mud bottom. Opposite this port there is a fine level beach, possessing deep water close to the edge, which would form an admirable site for a town, and where, at very little expense, a wharf might be constructed, capable of accommodating almost any number of vessels."—*Central America*, p. 26.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PRIESTHOOD IN NICARAGUA—DECLINE IN THE INFLUENCE OF THE CHURCH—BANISHMENT OF THE ARCHBISHOP—SUPPRESSION OF THE CONVENTS—PROHIBITION OF PAPAL BULLS—LEGITIMIZATION OF THE CHILDREN OF PRIESTS—THE THREE ABANDONED CONVENTS OF LEON—PADRE CARTINE, THE LAST OF THE FRANCISCANS—RECEPTION, OR CLOCK ROOM—THE PADRE'S PETS; HIS ORATORY; PRIVATE APARTMENTS; WORKSHOP—A SKULL AND ITS HISTORY—THE EGLESIA DEL RECOLECCION—THE PADRE AS A LANDLORD; AS A PAINTER; AS AN UNCLE; AND AS NEGOTIATOR IN MARRIAGE—AN AUSPICIOUS OMEN—DEATH OF THE VICAR OF THE DIOCESS OF NICARAGUA—HIS OBSEQUIES—A FUNERAL ORATION—PRIESTLY ELOQUENCE—AN EPITAPH—GENERAL FUNERAL CEREMONIES—DEATH AS AN ANGEL OF MERCY—BURIAL PRACTICES—CAPELLANIAS; THEIR EFFECTS, AND THE POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT IN RESPECT TO THEM—POPULAR BIGOTRY AND SUPERSTITION—AN ANCIENT INDULGENCE—THE POTENCY OF AN EJACULATION—REMISSION OF SINS—PENETENCIAS—RATIONALE OF THE PRACTICE—NOVEL PENANCES—TURNING SINS TO GOOD ACCOUNT—GOOD FROM EVIL—SYSTEM OF THE PADRE CARTINE—THE DIOCESS OF NICARAGUA, AND ITS BISHOP—GENERAL EDUCATION—PUBLIC SCHOOLS—THE UNIVERSITIES OF LEON AND GRANADA—A SAD PICTURE.

ALTHOUGH there is probably less religious bigotry in Nicaragua and San Salvador than in most of the Spanish American States, yet the priests still exercise considerable influence amongst the popular masses. To their credit, however, be it said, that many of them, although not highly educated, are not only men of liberal sentiments, but amongst the most active promoters of measures of general improvement. Previous to the Independence, the Church in Central America was well endowed, and quite as exacting as in any other part of the continent, or in Spain itself. For some

time subsequent to that event, it retained much of its strength, and was active in the political affairs of the country. Unfortunately, its influence was seldom felt in behalf of liberal institutions, general or local.

It is not to be doubted that the men who were the promoters of the Independence, and most active in the establishment of the Republic, were very little under priestly influence; for one of the first acts of the National Constituent Assembly was to prohibit the sale of Papal indulgences, and to limit the exactions of the Church. This policy arrayed the priestly influence against the new order of things, and it was henceforth exercised in favor of the aristocratical, monarchical, or Servile faction, against the Liberals and the Republic,—thus becoming one of the causes of many of the disasters to which the country has since been subjected. Yet the zeal of the Priests did not fail to react upon themselves. They entered into the arena of politics, and were treated as partisans in the civil contests. They espoused the cause of an obnoxious faction, and came to share its odium as well as its misfortunes. The Liberals, emancipated from the machinery of the Church, soon began to look with incredulity on its doctrines, and with contempt on its forms; and although the people of Central America are still nominally Catholics, yet amongst those capable of reflection, or possessed of education, there are more who are destitute of any fixed creed, rationalists, or what are sometimes called free thinkers, than Catholics, or adherents of any form of religion. Many of the priests share in the general skepticism.

The first decided encounter between the Church and the Republic, was in 1825, when the people of San Salvador, the stronghold of Liberalism, dissatisfied with the political tendencies of the Bishop of Guatemala, under whose ecclesiastical jurisdiction they were, elected a Bishop of their own, in defiance of the Archbishop and the Pope. This example was soon after followed by Nicaragua. The ignorant priest-

hood, the friars of Quesaltenango, siding with the Archbishop and the Serviles, infuriated by this and other bold innovations, contrived to excite the Indians in Los Altos, who in their fury cruelly slaughtered the vice-president of the Republic; and for a time the Liberals were overwhelmed by the coalition. They, however, afterwards rallied under Gen. Morazan. During his enlightened and vigorous sway, in 1829, it was discovered that the Archbishop was intriguing against the government; and it was then the Church received a blow from which it can never recover. Morazan was not a man to be trifled with; he boldly seized the Archbishop, and sent him out of the country under a guard of soldiers, forbidding his return under penalty of death. The monks and friars belonging to the various convents and monasteries of Guatemala, who were deeply concerned with the Archbishop, were expelled in an equally summary manner. But the measures thus commenced did not stop here. The Legislature of Guatemala decreed the suppression of all the male convents, prohibited females from becoming nuns for the future, and appropriated the revenues of the suppressed monasteries. This act was ratified by the General Congress, which, catching the same spirit, within two months after the banishment of the Archbishop declared all religious orders at an end throughout the Republic. This decisive measure met with the almost unanimous sanction of the people, and was at once carried into effect in the several States. The Congress also decreed not only complete Religious Liberty, but that the appointment to church dignities pertained to the nation, and should be made by the President of the Republic; prohibited the promulgation of all papal bulls, unless they had received the previous sanction of the Federal Government, as also the sale or use of papal dispensations, of whatever character. The State of Honduras shortly afterwards passed a law, which, I believe, was also adopted by all the other States, legalizing the marriage of the priests, and legiti-

matizing their children, so as to permit of their succeeding to their fathers' property.[1]

Subsequently to the dissolution of the confederacy, and under the direction of the Servites, the convents of Guatemala were re-established, but the other States have persisted in the prohibitory action of 1829, or rather no attempt has been made to revive the monasteries suppressed under it. There were formerly, as I have already said, three convents in Leon; that of San Juan de Dios has been converted into a hospital; that of La Merced is only used by the government in case of need as a cuartel, or barracks. The largest, the Franciscan, although in a state of hopeless decay, is still watched over faithfully by the Padre Cartine. He has thus far preserved its precincts sacred from profane intrusion, and lingers silently amongst its dilapidated corridors, and weed-infested courts, like the antiquary amongst the tombs, the last of the powerful fraternity of San Francisco in Leon.

The Padre Cartine is a learned man, in the continental acceptation of the term of two centuries ago. That is to say, he reads Latin and the Fathers, and is familiar with the Natural History of Pliny,—the latest book on the subject with which he is acquainted, and which is his sole authority.

[1] In their zeal to educate the people, and to weaken their religious prejudices, theatres were established, in which the arts and objects of priest-craft were exposed to ridicule, contempt, and reprobation. A play called "La Inquisicion por dentro," or "A Peep into the Inquisition," had a great run, and brought that institution into effectual and lasting odium.

"In Guatemala," says Mr. Crowe, "Papal bulls of indulgence, which used to be as much valued as paper currency in other countries, are now used by the shopkeepers as waste paper for wrapping their goods. In San Salvador, the Bishop, a few years since, offered first twenty and afterwards forty days of plenary indulgence, to be deducted from the period of purgatorial sufferings after death, to all who should aid in removing an unsightly mound of earth which disgraced one of the squares of the city, and injured the effect of the Cathedral; but the mound remained, although the Bishop again doubled the promised remission."

The Padre is withal a mathematician, has a Latin edition of Euclid, and reads it once a year by way of amusement, and to refresh his memory. He is an architect, and has made a plan for the restoration of the convent, on a scale of splendor which would beggar a prince to carry out, and feels as anxious about its accuracy as if the masons were to commence to-morrow, and any defect in the plan would ruin the architectural effect of the structure for ever.

I am not likely to forget my first visit to Padre Cartine. I found him seated in a broad arm-chair, in the principal room of his house. He had been a man of fine proportions, but was now a little corpulent, a defect only to be observed when he was standing. His head was of fine outline, large, and massive, and his face had an expression of intelligence, dignity, and equanimity, at once pleasing and impressive. He wore a dress of coarse, gray serge, bound at the waist by a rough pita cord, for he still kept up many of the austere practices of his order. The furniture of the house was plain and simple, and I believe all of the Padre's own manufacture. Upon a low bench extending around two sides of the room, was a most incongruous assortment of clocks, of every date, pattern, and country, from a tall cupboard contrivance of the last century, dingy with age, in the corner, through every intermediate variety, to a little German or French concern, which ticked spitefully from the opposite wall. There were cases without clocks, and clocks without cases; besides a wilderness of weights, cords, pulleys, wheels, and springs; for the Padre was so passionately fond of clocks, that he not only kept an extensive variety of his own to tinker, but borrowed all of his neighbors', and encouraged the distant villagers to bring him theirs for gratuitous cleansing and repair. No Jew's second-hand furniture-shop in Chatham street could afford more than a very faint counterpart of this curious collection. The Padre observed that they attracted my attention, and commenced a philosophical lecture on

horology, which I hastily brought to a close by suggesting a walk through the old convent and the church which had been attached to it. In the first courtyard were half a dozen deer, tame as kittens, which came bounding up at the sound of the Padre's voice; they licked his extended hand, and held down their heads to have them rubbed, but failing to cajole the Padre out of a plantain or tortilla, butted him playfully, and struck at him with well-feigned malice. Upon one side of this court the Padre had fitted up a private chapel. It contained a marble altar, a wax figure of Christ, and a great variety of valuable ornaments saved from the wreck of the monastery, and with which no earthly consideration could prevail upon the Padre to part. An expression, half of sorrow, half of pride, passed over the Padre's face as he held the door open that we might see the precious contents of his oratory. From this he took us to a large room, his own private apartment, in which was the rough hide bed whereon he slept, and which contrasted strangely with a rich set of travelling wine and liqueur bottles, which he complacently displayed to us, (not badly filled, by the way), in a secure closet. In another room the Padre had his workshop. In one corner was a foot-lathe of his own construction, in which he turned beads from the arm-bones of defunct Señoras, to be strung on consecrated rosaries, and sold for the benefit of piety and the church—whose interests have always wonderfully accorded. Here were kettles containing purified sulphur from the volcanoes, nitre, and charcoal, to be compounded for the glorification of the saints, the service of the Lord, and the utter desperation of heretics, in the form of bombas. Here, too, was a machine, also of the Padre's invention and construction, for grinding and polishing the glasses of spectacles, for the Padre, amongst his multifarious accomplishments, was an optician, the only one, probably, in all Central America. He had, in fact, constructed a telescope for the University of Leon, and astounded the citizens by

showing them the rings of Saturn! "You are a most accomplished man, Padre," said I, glancing at his mechanical achievements. "*Juguetes*," playthings, mere playthings, responded the Padre, with a complacent smile, which was intended to be depreciatory. In the third courtyard, next the church, grew a magnificent mango tree. At its foot a mozo had been digging, to extirpate some burrowing animal, and had thrown up a variety of human bones, and amongst them a skull. Its delicate proportions attracted my attention, and I stepped aside and picked it up.

"Ah, Padre, this is a woman's skull, a girl's skull, I am sure! Padre, how came it here?"

The Padre took it quickly from my hand, looked at it, and then gazed in an abstracted, reflecting manner upon the spot which it had occupied. After a few moments' silence, he spoke, deliberately removing the earth from the eye sockets with his fore-finger;

"Ah, Señor! she was very beautiful, this girl. She was the youngest daughter of Señora M——! Heaven rest her soul! She died of the cholera in the year '37. Five thousand of our people died in four short months, Señor! The Señorita Inez! She was only sixteen years old, Señor; but yet a woman, and beautiful, very beautiful!"

And the Padre held the delicate skull before him, as if it was clothed with flesh again, and he gazed upon the smiling face once more.

"Very beautiful," he soliloquized. "She was amongst the first; there are five hundred buried in this very court, Señor," said the Padre rapidly, turning towards me, and crossing himself. "Five thousand in four months! in four short months!"

The expression of the old man's face, as the memory of those four months came back upon him, showed how terrible and ineffaceable were the scenes which they had witnessed. "She was very beautiful!" and the Padre placed the skull gently

in the earth again, laid the delicate bones carefully around it, and with his naked hand scraped the loose earth above them.

The interior of the Eglesia del Recoleccion, which has a most elaborate façade, covered with shields on which are exhibited all the prominent devices of the church, was dark and gloomy. The altar was a fine one, and the Padre kept a lamp burning constantly before an image of the Virgin, which looked spectral enough beneath its feeble rays. A number of pictures were suspended upon the walls, among which were a variety of saints frying complacently upon gridirons, smiling from stakes of impalement, or sailing smoothly away amongst a swarm of baby angels and bodiless cherubs, to a most substantial looking heaven, elevated only a few yards above the earth. We ascended into the tower by a series of rickety stairs, with gaps here and there ranging from one to four steps, up which the prudent Padre did not essay to go. From this tower we obtained a fine view, second only to that to be had from the top of the Cathedral. As we descended, a huge owl, which we had startled from his roost in some dark corner of the tower, nearly knocked us over in his flight. We returned through the Golgotha, to the grand reception or clock room, where the Padre showed us his plan for restoring the convent, in red and black ink, which required only a single thing to its realization, and that was precisely what the Padre did not know how to obtain, viz., money! We nevertheless made him happy before leaving, by promising to write to the United States, on his behalf, to obtain a grand clock for his church, which should exhibit three dials, and strike the hours. "Con tres frentes!" repeated the Padre, calling after us as we passed down the street, "with three dials!"

The Padre ultimately became my landlord. I hired a house of him, which he had himself designed and built, opposite the old convento. It had a grand sala and two rooms

on the street, with quarters for the servants, and a kitchen, arranged after the usual plan,—altogether one of the most desirable buildings in Leon. It had before rented for six dollars per month, but as I was a particular friend of the Padre, I got it for nine. The Padre was really ashamed to ask that sum, but then he had written a religious pamphlet, which he wanted to publish, and I told him that I should be too happy to contribute to that laudable object, and that the house was worth twice the money,—which was pretty good, considering that the best house in Leon rented for but fourteen dollars per month. The Padre had achieved a great triumph in painting the interior of this house. It was done in fresco, in a style as novel as complicated, and with as many colors as could conveniently be compounded. But the Padre's *chef d'œuvre* was the *menagerie*, as we called it, upon the wall of the servants' corridor. His models had been the figures of animals and objects represented in the Child's First Primer, or illustrated alphabet, a copy of which he must have obtained from the United States or England, for there was the entire series commencing "A was an Ape that ran after his tail," down to "Z was a Zebra who came from the Cape," all depicted of large size, and in flaming colors. This fact will perhaps sufficiently illustrate the state of decorative art in Nicaragua.

The Padre had a niece (*de facto*, oh skeptic!) who, with her mother, occupied a detached part of his own house, and over whom, as she was exceedingly pretty, he kept most rigorous watch. He gave out, for the benefit of gallants, that he would shoot the first who should be seen around the premises, and really kept a loaded musket for the purpose. The Padre was a man of his word, and the threat was effectual in its object; the gallants kept away. The last time I heard from Leon, a young American, from Boston, was diplomatizing with the Padre for the hand of his sobrina; it went hard to resign her to a heretic, but the Padre's heart is

soft, and even rocks yield to time. Boston and Leon; Massachusetts and Nicaragua; the omen is auspicious and significant!

I have elsewhere mentioned the name of the Vicario of the Bishopric, Don Desiderio de la Quadra, who was the first of the clergy to pay his respects to me, upon my arrival in Leon. He was then ill, and died on the 4th of October following. His funeral was conducted with great ceremony and solemnity. On the morning of the 5th, circulars, of which the following is a copy, were directed to all the principal inhabitants, and left by a messenger bearing a silver cross shrouded in crape, from the Cathedral.

"Al Senor;——

"A las seis de la tarde de ayer ha muerto nuestro muy amado tio el Sr. Vicario Capitular y Apostòlico, Presbitero Beneficiado Dr. Don Jose Desiderio Quadra: su cadáver será sepultado en la Santa Catedral Yglesia de esta Ciudad, saliendo el entierro á las cuatro de la tarde de la casa de su morada. Si V. se dignase honrarle con su asistencia, le serán muy reconocidos sus mas atentos servidores Q. B. S. M.

Trinidad Quadra. Mateo Mayorga.

Leon, Octubre 5 de 1849.

At the appointed hour we proceeded to the house which the Vicar had occupied. It was a large building, furnished in the simplest manner, for the Vicar was a practical as well as professed follower of Christ, and was faithful to his vows of poverty. All of his income, except the small sum necessary to supply his frugal wants, was devoted to charity. The courtyard and the corridor were already filled with people; and the clergy occupied the grand sala in which the corpse was lying. The ceremonies of the funeral had already commenced, we could hear the chants and prayers, and see the wax lights, but the place was overcrowded, and we did not attempt to enter. After a while a passage was opened through the assemblage for the bearers of the dead,

preceded and surrounded by priests, full robed and with uncovered heads. The people in the courtyard knelt, as the remains were carried by. In the street was a sort of car, covered with drapery, upon which the corpse, dressed in the vicarial robes, was placed. Here another prayer was chanted; and when it was concluded, the car, surrounded by the entire body of the clergy, and preceded by the empty ecclesiastical carriage, moved towards the Cathedral. All the officers of State, and a large number of the principal citizens, bearing wax candles, followed; and then came the mass of the people, without order, but silently and decently. The cortege stopped at each corner, where a prayer was repeated in low recitative by the priests, who walked slowly around the car, and sprinkled the ground with holy water. The troops were drawn up with arms reversed, in the plaza, which the procession entered amidst the tolling of the muffled bells of the Cathedral. The body was carried up the main aisle, and placed upon an elevated platform, immediately in front of the great altar, while the choir filled the vast building with the solemn tones of the chant for the dead. The light fell from the dome full upon the rigid face of the corpse, calm and cold as marble, surrounded by earnest groups, standing silently in the shadows of the lofty arches. An extempore funeral oration was pronounced by the Senor Presbitero Dean D. Remijio Salazar, of the town of El Viejo. It was founded on the passage in the eleventh chapter of Leviticus, "Sed santos, porque yo soy santo." "Be ye holy, for I am holy," and was given with good oratorical effect and much feeling, and was altogether impressive and appropriate. Its tenor was to show that the deceased, from his observance of the requisitions of God and the church, was entitled to be regarded as a saint. The analysis of what constitutes "the Israelite indeed," was made with great clearness and eloquence, and in more pre-

tending countries than those of Nicaragua, would have stamped its author as a man of no ordinary abilities.

"The true saint," said the speaker, "walks apart from the glittering road trodden by the proud and selfish world. His is the path in the valley of humility. He pants not for the glory of the soldier, or the fame of the statesman, the splendor of wealth, or the dignity of social position. Has he talents? He consecrates them to our holy religion. Has he wealth? It is a free offering at the feet of Charity. Has he a lofty lineage, and illustrious name? He humbly surrenders them at the shrine of the Church. All this did the venerated dead! He was a man who feared God, and adhered steadfastly to his service; irreproachable in conduct, a faithful son, a true friend, an obedient citizen, a man disinterested in his views and actions, moderate in his desires, uncomplaining in adversity, humble, in prosperity; purified in the fire, weighed in the balance, by the loftiest standard of the Holy Law, he is proved a saint! And now, amidst the glorious array of saints and martyrs, beyond the clouded atmosphere of earth, in the eternal sunshine of Divinity, dwells that pure and immortal spirit whose rejected tenement, cold and motionless, we have assembled to consign to the silent house appointed for all living. Our tears fall on the earth, but our smiles are reflected in Heaven!"

Amongst the many epitaphs and fragmentary poetical tributes elicited by the death of this Vicar, the subjoined may be taken as a very fair example. With what has been presented elsewhere, it will no doubt satisfy the reader that the tropical muse seldom rises to lofty flights.

EPITAFIO

A la muerte del muy illustre y venerable Prelado, el Señor Presbitero Dr. Don Desiderio de la Quadra, Vicario Capitular de esta Diócesis.

Despues de tantos años de virtud,
El feudo pagas cual mortal viviente,

Para acercaros al trono Omnipotente
De aquel Dios de eterna beatitud:
Allí, allí la inmensa multitud
De santos que te adoran reverentes,
Abriendo campo à tu espirítu inocente,
Ponen en tus manos sonoro laúd.
Goza esa vida inmortal que te deseo
Al mismo tiempo que tu muerte lióro;
Y mientras entre los justos yo te veo,
Disfruta cantando en alto coro
Safírica corona por troféo
De Opalo una palma, una Silla de oro.
Leon, Octubre 5 de 1849.

The funeral of the Vicar was far more solemn than any other which I witnessed in the country. In most instances the funeral ceremony has few of those gloomy accessories which our customs prescribe as no more than decorous. Youth, innocence, and beauty, like ornaments on the brow of age, or on the withered limbs of deformity, serve only to heighten the terrors of our grim conception of death, the gloomy and remorseless tyrant who gloats, fiend-like, over the victims of his skeleton arm. Theirs is a happier conception. Death mercifully relieves the infant from the sorrows and the dangers of life; and withers the rose on the cheeks of youth, that it may retain its bloom and fragrance in the more genial atmosphere of Heaven. The tear of grief falls only for those whose long contact with the world has effaced the stamp of divinity, whose matured passions have cankered the heart, and whose misdirected ambitions have diverted the aspirations of the soul and the energies of the mind from heaven to earth, from the grandeurs of Eternity to the frivolities of Time.

The youngest daughter of the Licenciado D. died and was buried in the latter part of October. She was young, scarce sixteen, and the idolized child of her parents. Her funeral might have been her bridal, in its total freedom from out-

ward manifestations of grief. The procession formed before my window. First were musicians playing a cheerful strain, and next the priests chaunting a song of triumph. After them, on the shoulders of young men, was borne a litter, covered with white satin and loaded with orange branches, amidst which, dressed in white as for a festival, her head wreathed with pure white flowers, and holding in her hands a silver cross, was the marble form of the dead girl. The bereaved parents, the sisters and relations of the deceased followed; their eyes were tearless, and though the traces of sorrow were visible on their faces, yet over all there was an expression of hope, and of faith in the teachings of Him who has declared "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

The funerals of infants are much the same. The body is invariably dressed in white, and covered with flowers. Men firing rockets, and musicians playing lively airs, precede the corpse, and the parents and relatives follow. The rationale of this apparent want of feeling is to be found in the Romish doctrine of baptismal regeneration, according to which the departed spirit being in heaven, there is more cause for happiness than grief.

When an adult is dangerously ill, or dying, a priest is called, who goes for the Viaticum. An altar is hastily erected in the sick chamber; a crucifix is placed upon it, surrounded with lighted candles and flowers, a place being left for the *Costodia*, a vessel generally of gold and richly jewelled, containing the consecrated wafer. This is brought by a priest in a litter or carriage, surrounded by soldiers and boys bearing lighted candles, and preceded by music,—sometimes consisting only of a single violin. The people kneel as the procession passes through the streets. Arrived at the sick chamber, the sacrament and the last rites of the church are administered to the dying one, whose friends, gathering close around the bed, whisper "Jesus te ampara," "Jesus te aux-

ilie," "Maria te favoresca,"—Jesus protect thee, Jesus help thee, Maria favor thee,—and then, when they suppose the final struggle transpiring, they ejaculate, "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus!"

"Among the more refined inhabitants," says Mr. Crowe, in his interesting book on Guatemala, (and the same practice is followed throughout the country,) "after the coffin, covered with black velvet, has been removed from between the gigantic candles which cast a pale glare upon it in the sombre apartment, it is followed by a long train of friends on foot, bearing lighted candles, to the church, and then to the cemetery. When the corpse has been finally deposited, the friends return slowly and in groups to the house of mourning, where the chief mourner has remained, and is now waiting to receive them in a large room or hall, hung with black cloth, at one end of which he sits, supported on his left or right by two near kinsmen or special friends. The visitors sit silently before him for a few minutes, on seats which are placed for them on either side of the room, and having thus manifested their participation in the grief of the family, they rise, one after another, gently press the hand of the chief mourner, and, if they are intimate friends, perhaps add a word or two of condolence. They then retire, and are succeeded by others in the same manner." [1]

There is, however, much that is repugnant in the burials, particularly as practised in Leon. Near most of the towns is what is called the Campo Santo, an enclosed consecrated cemetery, in which the dead are buried upon the payment of a small sum, which is devoted to keeping the grounds in order. But in Leon the practice of burying in the churches has always prevailed, and is perpetuated through the influence of the priests, who derive a considerable fee from each burial. The consequence is, that the ground within and

[1] Gospel in Central America, p. 373.

around the churches has become (if the term is admissible) saturated with the dead. The burials are made according to the amount paid to the church, for from ten to twenty-five years, at the end of which time the bones, with the earth around them, are removed and sold to the manufacturers of nitre! The government has opposed the entire practice for many years, and during the period of the cholera prohibited it. But the instability of affairs in the country has been such, that the authorities have hesitated to provoke the hostility of the entire priesthood by putting a peremptory end to the practice. Coffins are rarely used. The corpse is placed at the bottom of the grave, the earth rudely thrown in, and beaten hard with heavy rammers, with a degree of indifference, not to say brutality, which is really shocking, and which I never permitted myself to witness a second time.

Amongst the sources of revenue to which the priesthood has adhered with greatest tenacity, and the gradual abolition of which is one of the leading measures of the Government policy of Nicaragua, is what is called the *capellanía*, or lien on property, conveyed to the priests by proprietors at their death, to secure certain masses or other priestly interpositions on behalf of their souls, or conveyed to churches for the same laudable objects. Thus Don Fulano finding his end approaching, gives to his priest a lien of twenty dollars a year on his estate, in consideration of which a certain number of masses shall be said for him annually. Next year the Doña Fulano dies, and, not to be outdone in piety, she secures to her favorite church another annual sum to be invested in "villainous saltpetre" for the glorification of her protecting Santa, and the benefit of her own "alma." It will readily be seen that the continuance of this process through a series of years must, in the end, seriously embarrass the real estate of the country, and prove an effectual check to the improvement of that species of property. Thus the most desirable portions of Leon, once covered with squares of

palaces, are now waste and unoccupied, in consequence of the accumulation of the capellanias, which exceed in amount the market value of the ground.

During my stay in Leon, and in spite of the opposition of those interested in maintaining them, the Legislative Chambers decreed the abolition of ten per cent. of the capellanias, excepting those dedicated to educational purposes. Previously, I believe, fifteen per cent. had been appropriated by the Government, and offered for commutation at a nominal sum. The entire extinction of the capellanias, and the release of the property which they have so long burthened and rendered valueless, will be the ultimate and happy result of these advances.

I have said that the masses of the people still cherish something of their original religious bigotry. It is, nevertheless, fast giving way to more liberal sentiments, and no objection is made to foreigners on the score of religion, so long as they preserve a decent respect for the ceremonies of the church, and do not outrage the prejudices which education and custom have created, and which are no more numerous nor stronger than with us, although they have a somewhat different direction. That there is much of ignorance and superstition amongst the people, is unfortunately true; nor is the fact at all surprising, in consideration of their antecedents, and the circumstances under which they have been placed.

It is somewhat difficult to ascertain how far the faith of the better classes in papal infallibility, and other matters to which an apparent entire deference is accorded, really extends. We can hardly conceive that the following antiquated

[1] An English Protestant Missionary, Mr. F. Crowe, who was established in Guatemala for some years, until driven out by the servile Government, has recently published a work entitled the "Gospel in Central America," in which he observes:

"Of the fact that infidelity has spread extensively in Central America,

indulgence should be posted upon every door in the houses of the most intelligent familes, except in politic conformity to prejudices, not shared by those families themselves, but which they do not care to oppose. Yet it met my eye almost everywhere, in the houses alike of the rich and the poor, of the Indian and the Cabellero :—

ALABADO SEA EL SANTISIMO SACRAMENTO DEL ALTAR!

Nuestro Santìsimo Padre Paulo V. de felìz memoria, en su Bula de 17. de Abril despachada en Roma del año del Señor de 1612. concediò indulgencia plenaria, y remision de la tercera parte de los pecados, á cualquiera persona que en su casa tuviere escrito donde su pueda lér ☞ LA ANTERIOR JACULATORIA ; ☜ y la misma indulgencia plenaria, todas las veces que lo leyéren, y el que no supiere lér, veneráre el escrito.

Copiado del original de indulgencias.

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and particularly so amongst the very classes upon which Romanism had formerly the strongest hold, there can be no doubt. It is proved by the almost total abandonment of the outward observances of Popery by the better educated amongst the Ladinos, and, in spite of their political tendencies, by the whites and pure Creoles also. With the exception of the more weak amongst the women and children, scarcely any of these classes are now to be seen attending mass or confession, and other requirements are generally neglected by them. Numbers of infidel books are to be found in the libraries, and in the hands of all classes and sexes. So strongly are the minds of these classes imbued with deistical and atheistical notions, that it becomes apparent, and is unblushingly avowed in

PRAISE BE TO THE
MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR!

"Our most holy Father Paul V. of happy memory, in his Bull from Rome, April 17, in the year of our Lord 1612, conceded plenary indulgence and remission of the third part of his sins to whoever should write in his house where it might be read ☞THE PRECEDING EJACULATION☜; and the same plenary indulgence every time he should read it, or if he should not be able to read, every time he should "venerate the writing," i. e., look upon it with veneration.

"Bendito y alabado sea el Santo Sacramento del Altar," Blessed and praised be the holy Sacrament of the Altar, is the common ejaculation of the servant who in the evening, first brings lighted candles into the occupied rooms of the various houses. It is uttered mechanically, in a drawling, nasal tone, and was formerly always responded to by the members of the family; but like many other customs, the latter part of the practice has now become obsolete. The recipient of a favor acknowledges it by "Dios se lo pague," God repay you; if an engagement is made, it is with the qualification, "si Dios quiere," if God wills; and when a bond is entered into, it is always with the reservation, "Primero Dios," i. e., if my first duty to God will permit. The "higher law" is always recognized, in form if not in spirit.

general conversation. Nay, some of the more candid among the priests openly espouse these notions."—p. 257.

Some of the priests, this author adds, ridicule the pretended authority of the Pope, and rejoice at the emancipation of the people from the Church of Rome. Mr. Crowe rejoices also, at the success of infidelity over Romanism, as likely to result in good. "The change from Popery, or any other analogous system," he writes, "to the entire rejection of revealed religion, is one which believers in Divine Revelation may hail with satisfaction, if they be prepared to take advantage of it; for it breaks up prejudices of education, leads to thought and inquiry, and sometimes to a sincere and earnest search after truth!"

"Dios sobre todos," God over all, is the commonest of proverbs.

The public Penitencias, or Penances, afford striking illustrations of the strength of the popular superstitions, and of the priestly influence. I witnessed one of these, shortly after my arrival in Leon. It consisted of a long procession of men and boys, one or two hundred in number, barefooted and stripped to the waist, their heads and faces covered with veils so as to prevent recognition, who marched through the public streets, from one church to another, flagellating themselves with raw hide thongs. They were preceded by a life-size figure of Christ on the cross, a score of musicians, and a crowd of priests and women, (all of the latter barefooted and some bearing heavy crosses on their shoulders,) who chanted prayers, while the penitents beat time with the thongs over their own shoulders. Each one carried a little cross before him in his hand, with his head bent forward as if in earnest contemplation of the sacred symbol. It was a singular spectacle; for there were black bodies, and brown, and white bodies, and yellow, and the sharp strokes of the thongs in the pauses of the slow and mournful music, fairly made the flesh of the spectator creep. There was, however, no special occasion for sympathy, for each penitent had it in his power to graduate the force of his own blows to his own notions of the enormity of his moral offences. Some laid it on gently,—moderate sinners!—merely as a matter of form; but there were others who punished themselves lustily, and drew blood from their quivering flesh at every blow, which ran down to their very heels, and purpled the ground where they trod.

It seems almost incredible that these heathenish practices, only one remove from human sacrifices, should yet be perpetuated amongst nations claiming to be civilized. Still, when we reflect that fasts and other mortifications of the body are prescribed by the rituals of our own churches, and pro-

claimed from the executive chair of our own nation, we ought not to be surprised at any manifestation of human folly, or wonder that the popular conception of God is not yet purified from the horrible and detestable features with which it was invested in the darkest ages of the world, and in the most debased stages of the human mind. The belief that the all-good and ominipotent Ruler of the Universe can be pleased with the self-inflicted punishment of his creatures, whether it be through fasting or flagellation, differs in no respect from that which actuates the frantic Hindoo, who prostrates himself before the crushing wheels of Jaggenath, or that inflamed the poor Mexican, who offered his willing breast to the knife of the Aztec priest, that his palpitating heart might bathe the lips of the idol which was the visible representation of his sanguinary God!

There were other Penitencias, not public, but which were perhaps more severe. A hundred or more of the penitents are sometimes locked within a church, where they remain for nine days, sleeping but four hours out of the twenty-four, and eating but once in that period. The rest of the time is divided between the various ceremonies prescribed by the rigid rules of the penitencia, upon their knees, or prone on the rough floor of the dark church in which they are confined. While I resided near the Eglesia de la Merced, one of these penitencias took place, and I was several times awakened in the dead of night by the wailings of the penitents, mingling harshly with the low and cheerful melodies of that Nature which harmonizes with its great Author, and upon whose laws kingcraft and priestcraft, the world over, and in every age, have waged a constant and most unnatural and unholy war. The horrible doctrine of original sin, and the efficacy of austerities, penances, and immolations, parts of one system, find the best evidence of their truth in the fact of their existence amongst men! I saw the enthusiasts when they came out of the church, pale, haggard, and filthy;

some, in fact, so exhausted that they could not walk without assistance, and who tottered from the scenes of their debasement to beds of sickness and death.

Very novel penances are sometimes prescribed by the priests by way of atonement for individual iniquities. The Padre Cartine was particularly ingenious and happy in imposing them. Lazy fellows and *bon vivants*, to whom he thought exercise and fasting would prove beneficial, he sent bare-footed and alone to El Viejo, or some place at a distance, under the restriction to speak to no human being on the way, nor to eat, nor yet to sleep, until their return. A heavy stone, rough and angular, had sometimes to be carried on the naked shoulders of the penitent, or a cross of heavy wood, according to the more or less heinous nature of the poor devil's offences. Carpenters, masons, and all other valuable sinners, whose labor could be turned to good account, the Padre set to work in repairing or improving his church and the buildings attached to it, and never failed to put the good workmen "well in for it." Occasionally he got hold of a stupid fellow who failed to perform a profitable day's labor. In such cases the Padre had a whip, made of the skin of the *danto*, or tapir, which he scrupled not to apply to the delinquent's back, for the benefit of his soul, and the acceleration of the particular job in hand. And it is reported that these applications are sometimes accompanied with terms more forcible than complimentary; but I don't vouch for the truth of that.

For one or two months during my stay in Leon, the Padre had under his surveillance a priest, suspended for licentious conduct, with whom he was extremely rigorous. I was an accidental witness of his severity on one occasion, when the Host was passing. The suspended Padre, in common with all the people, came to the door, but instead of bending like the rest on the hard threshold, he knelt comfortably in a soft-bottomed chair. The indignant monk saw the dodge,

and rising hastily, with a vigorous blow of his foot knocked the chair from underneath the delinquent, who came down with a force which must have jarred every bone in his sinful body. The course of fasting and prayer through which that priest was "put" by the Padre Cartine, if report speaks true,—midnight vigils, and noonday masses,—would have reformed Silenus, and made a saint of Bacchus.

Nicaragua and Costa Rica together constitute a Diocess of a very ancient date. It was organized as early as 1526. For the period intervening between 1832 and 1849, the Bishop's chair was vacant; but in the latter year Don GEORGE VITERI Y UNGO, once Secretary of State of Guatemala, and subsequently Bishop of San Salvador, received the appointment, and is now in discharge of its functions. I have already described him as a man of great intelligence, and polished manners. He has travelled much, and never fails to leave a favorable impression on the minds of foreigners. Yet in the country he is accounted an *intrigante*, and does not seem to enjoy the full confidence of the leading inhabitants, who nevertheless treat him with all respect and courtesy. While Bishop of San Salvador, he is said to have taken an undue interest in political affairs, and this was the cause of his deposition from that diocess; for the people of San Salvador are quite as liberal in religion as politics, and will tolerate no interference in public affairs by the clergy, as such. They nevertheless concede to them the utmost latitude as individuals, and while making no distinctions in their favor, make none against them.

In respect to Education, both amongst the clergy and the people of Nicaragua, little need be said, except that the standard is exceedingly low. I spare myself the painful necessity of writing upon the subject, by translating the following impartial passages from a private letter on this point, addressed to me by one of the best informed and patriotic citizens of Leon. A knowledge of their own deficiencies and

wants, by any people, is indispensable to secure a remedy; and the fact that some of the best men in Nicaragua are looking the evils of ignorance full in the face, is one of the best signs in the horoscope of the country.

"Education in Nicaragua," says my correspondent, "is generally much neglected; particularly in the departments of Chontales and Segovia, where there are some towns without a single teacher of any grade. Here the elements of education are only taught, if taught at all, by the fathers of families to their children, in the evening before going to bed; but this instruction seldom reaches beyond learning them to repeat their catechism. In these places, as also in some others where there are teachers, it is a common thing for parents to send their children to the house of some poor neighbor, where they are taught the catechism, and to make certain pot-hooks, called writing. These apologies for teachers have no recompense beyond an occasional small present. The mode adopted by them is to repeat the lesson once or twice *viva voce*, with the children; and their principal occupation consists in permitting the latter to do what they please, and in assisting them in doing it!

"In the towns where there are teachers, there are seldom more than one or two public schools; in the larger places there are, perhaps, a few more, but unfortunately all of pretty nearly the same character with those above described. In these schools are taught only the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, reading and writing; nor is this done in accordance with any good system, but generally by a process which is little better than a burlesque. The lesson is repeated after the master, simultaneously by the whole school, and it is difficult to say which shouts loudest, the master or the scholars; but it is always easy to tell the proximity of a schoolhouse, from the noise. The localities of these schools are generally bad and filthy, as is also the clothing of the scholars, which often consists of nothing more than a shirt.

In some of the towns, as Masaya, Managua, and Chinandega, the public schools are filled to overflowing, and as each one has no more than a single teacher, he can only bestow a very superficial attention upon the individual scholars. In these towns there are also some higher schools, in which Latin is taught, after the old method, painful alike to teacher and student, and generally with no result except the knowledge that Señor Fulano has studied this language for so many years! There are also, in these towns, phantom classes in what is called Philosophy, the extent of whose acquirements consists in studying badly, and understanding worse, some paragraphs in Lugdunensis.

"Besides their public schools, both Granada and Leon have each a University. That of Leon is oldest, having been founded in the year 1675.

"In these Universities are taught the following branches: Latin and Spanish Grammar, Philosophy, Civil and Canonical Law, and Theology. Lately a class in English has been organized in that of Leon; and a class in both English and French in that of Granada. Of Mathematics and other cognate branches nothing is taught, nor scarcely anything known. The authority in Spanish is Alemany; in Latin, Nebrisa; in Philosophy, Lugdunensis; in Civil Law, Salas; in Canonical Law, Devoti; in Theology, Larraga. The time devoted to these studies is, to Spanish, Grammar, and Latin, two years and a half; to Philosophy, two years; Civil and Canonical Law, and Theology, three years. But many have not the patience to go through the prescribed time, and leaping over these various branches of study, succeed in securing their titles. There are priests, in orders, who have never so much as read the Padre Larraga!

"In order to obtain the degrees and secure the tassel, it is not necessary to know much; it is enough to have a general idea or two, to stand well with the professors, be able to pay the fees punctually, to spread a good table of refresh-

ments, and to have a blazing display of fireworks. I have known instances in which the candidate did not answer well more than a single question, and yet obtained unanimously the degree which he sought. There are more Bachelors than men; Doctors swarm everywhere; and there are families of wealth and influence in which the tassel goes (practically) by descent!

"The professors of Languages and Civil Law in 1850, in Leon, were very good; but the professor in the latter department, occupied with other matters, has permitted his place to be very poorly filled by certain Bachelors. In fact, all the professors do but little; principally because their salaries are insignificant in amount, seldom exceeding $200 per annum. Their lectures are got through with very rapidly, rarely occupying more than an hour each, and are scarcely ever illustrated, or enforced by examples in point.

"Concerning the University of Granada, I am not well informed, but it is doubtless on about the same footing with that of Leon; or, if any comparison may be instituted, something worse.

"To the defects in the system of Education in Nicaragua is to be ascribed, in great part, the troubles with which the State has been afflicted. There is nothing practical in the lessons which are taught in the schools: the studies are all abstract, and the fixedness of character and liberality of views which follow from a knowledge of the present condition and relations of the world, an understanding of modern sciences, Geography, Chemistry, Mineralogy, Mathematics, Engineering, etc., etc., are never attained. The men of education, so called, are therefore mere creatures of circumstances and impulses, in common with the most ignorant portion of the population, and fully as vacillating in their ideas. Their education is just sufficient to give them power to do mischief, instead performing the legitimate office of truly comprehensive acquirements, that of a balance-wheel.

What may be called the moral effect of an education, that which contributes to form the character of the man and mould it upon a just model, is wanting in the system, or rather no-system, not only of Nicaragua, but of all the other Spanish American States.

"In Nicaragua, therefore, in the absence of teachers, methods, books, instruments, and of nearly all the elements of teaching, there is nothing which can properly be called education.[1] Not because there are no latent capacities or dispositions for learning amongst the people; nor do I mean to say that there is a total absence of really cultivated and well-educated men. On the contrary, there a number who have had opportunities of acquiring education through the assistance of private teachers, or who have perfected themselves abroad; but these are lost in the mass of ignorance and shallow acquirements which surround them.

"In Leon, I may add, there are ten or a dozen schools, in some of which there is an average daily attendance of two hundred scholars. The highest pay of teachers is ten dollars per month."

But notwithstanding the general deficiency in education, and the means of acquiring it, there exists a most laudable

[1] "The books employed," says Mr. Crowe, "besides the gloomy character of their contents, are in bulk sufficient to discourage the most enterprising child. They are four or five in number, consisting of heavy volumes, which make an antique collection, heavy and dry enough to discourage adults. First 'La Cartilla,' containing the alphabet, the forms of prayer, and the commandments of the Church, with no attempt at gradation. The second, 'El Canon,' the third, 'El Catecismo,' and fourth, 'El Ramillete.' All these, which are much larger than the first, contain theological definitions, digests of doctrines, creeds, holy legends, and devotional formulas, addressed to the Virgin and the Saints. Through every one of these the unhappy scholar is doomed to wade from beginning to end; and so deep is his aversion to the task, and so great is the triumph when a child has overcome one of these obstacles to his progress, that the event is actually celebrated in his family by feasting."—p. 287.

ambition to secure its benefits. The States of Nicaragua, San Salvador, and Costa Rica, offer the largest encouragement to the establishment of schools of every grade. Under the old Confederation, during the dominance of the Liberals, the most effective means were adopted to educate the people. The officers of the army and the subordinates of the Government, when not occupied with the immediate duties of their stations, opened free schools in the barracks of the soldiery, in the offices of customs, and the rooms of the general and local courts. The house of the National Government, at the close of office hours, became an academy. But the system of education, as all the other plans of improvement originating with the Liberals, were suspended during the disturbances created by the Serviles, and overthrown whenever and wherever the latter attained ascendancy. In the new career now opening before Central America, the subject of education claims and no doubt will receive the first attention of the respective States. But nothing beneficial can be done without a complete abandonment of the old systems of teaching—old authorities and books, and the substitution of others adapted to the age, and the state of general knowledge amongst civilized nations. If creeds and catechisms are still required, let them be assigned their proper time and place; they constitute no part of an education, and are chilling and oppressing in their influences on the youthful mind. The sooner this fact is not only understood, but acted upon, in Central America, the better for its people.

CHAPTER XV.

VISIT TO THE CAPITAL CITY, MANAGUA—LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY; HOW TO PROCURE A QUORUM—EXECUTIVE MESSAGE—RATIFICATION OF TREATY WITH THE UNITED STATES—ANTIQUITIES—LAKE OF NIHAPA—HUERTAS—DIVIDING RIDGE—TRACES OF VOLCANIC ACTION—HACIENDA DE GANADO—AN EXTENSIVE PROSPECT—EXTINCT CRATER—ANCIENT PAINTINGS ON THE CLIFFS—SYMBOLICAL FEATHERED SERPENT—A NATURAL TEMPLE—SUPERSTITIONS OF THE INDIANS—SALT LAKE—LAGUNA DE LAS LAVADORAS—A COURIER—THREE MONTHS LATER FROM HOME—THE SHORE OF LAKE MANAGUA—ABORIGINAL FISHERIES—ANCIENT CARVING—POPULATION OF MANAGUA—RESOURCES OF SURROUNDING COUNTRY—COFFEE—INHABITANTS—VISIT TIPITAPA—SUNRISE ON THE LAKE—HOT SPRINGS—OUTLET OF LAKE—MUD AND ALLIGATORS—DRY CHANNEL—VILLAGE OF TIPITAPA—SURLY HOST—SALTO DE TIPITAPA—HOT SPRINGS AGAIN—STONE BRIDGE—FACE OF THE COUNTRY—NICARAGUA OR BRAZIL WOOD—ESTATE OF PASQUIEL—PRACTICAL COMMUNISM—MATAPALO OR KILL-TREE—LANDING AND ESTERO OF PASQUIEL OR PANALOYA—RETURN—DEPTH OF LAKE MANAGUA—COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE TWO LAKES—POPULAR ERRORS.

ALTHOUH Leon is *de facto* the seat of the Nicaraguan Government, yet the framers of the existing constitution of the State, in view of the rivalry and jealousy which exist between the cities of Granada and Leon, and in order to relieve the Legislative Assembly from the overawing political influence of the latter, designated the city of Managua as the place of its meeting. The choice was in many respects a good one; Managua is not only central as regards position, but its inhabitants are distinguished for their attachment to "law and order," and their deference to constituted government.

The task of getting together the members of the Assembly, which is comprised of a House of Deputies and a Sen-

ate, is not an easy one. The attractions of the city of Managua are not great: the pay is only a dollar and a half per diem, and such is the precarious condition of the Treasury, that this small sum is not always secure. Nor are there any profitable contracts to be obtained for friends, with contingent reversions to incorruptible members; no mileage to speak of; in fact, few if any of those inducements to patriotic zeal which make our citizens so ambitious of seats in the National Congress. As a consequence, it is usually necessary, in order to secure a constitutional quorum for the transaction of business, to announce beforehand that a sufficient sum for the payment of members is actually in the Treasury, and will be reserved for that express purpose. But even this is not always sufficient, and the Government has several times come to a stand still for want of a quorum. An instance of this kind occurred during the administration of Gen. Guerrero, who found himself for a week in Managua, with his cabinet officers around him, but utterly unable to act. The Assembly lacked two of a quorum, and precisely that number of members, elected from the city of Leon, were absent. They were the Licenciado Z., and the Doctor of Medicine J., men of mark in the country, but for a variety of reasons not then desirous of committing themselves on the measures of public policy which were to be brought before the Chambers. The Director wrote to them, stating the condition of the Assembly, and soliciting their immediate attendance. The lawyer excused himself on the ground of illness, and the doctor, because he had no horse, nor money for his expenses. But they mistook their man; in a few minutes after their replies were received, the General had despatched two officers of the National Guard to Leon, and before daylight the next morning the Licenciado was politely waited upon by one of them, attended by a file of soldiers, and informed that there was an ox cart at the door, with a good bed of straw, in which the soldiers would carefully lift him,

and where he would find the army doctor, to administer to his necessities during his journey to Managua. The Licenciado expostulated, but the officer looked at his watch and coolly observed that the cart must start in precisely three minutes, and dead or alive the Licenciado must go. The doctor was waited upon in like manner, with the information that the Director had sent his own horse for his accommodation, and four rials (half a dollar) for his expenses, and that he had five minutes wherein to prepare himself for the excursion! It is needless to add that the lawyer was suddenly cured, and that both he and the delinquent doctor duly filled out the quorum at Managua. They each tell the story now as an exceedingly good joke, but the General avers that at the time of their appearance in their seats, their manners and temper were far from angelic.

The Legislative Assembly had been called to meet on the 15th of September, to act on the treaty just negotiated with the United States, and on the canal contract which had been conceded to certain American citizens, under the conditional guaranty of their government. The hopes of the people were much elevated, from the nature of the subjects to be brought before the Assembly, and it was thought that the constitutional quorum would be got together at the time appointed, without resort to any extraordinary measures for the purpose of securing it. It was not, however, until the 19th that we received official information of the organization of the Chambers, and we lost no time in proceeding to Managua, where Pedro Blanco had long before received orders to prepare a house for our reception, and to adopt efficient measures for the extirpation of "las pulgas." We left Leon on the afternoon of one day, and reached Managua during the forenoon of the next. Don Pedro had newly white-washed a house, occupying the "esquina," or corner opposite his own, and installed a couple of servants, in an-

ticipation of our arrival. So we were at once comfortably provided for.

The address, or message, of the Director had been delivered in joint meeting of the two Houses on the morning of our arrival, and everything was going on smoothly and harmoniously in the Assembly. It was, according to custom, delivered in person, to the two Houses in convention, and responded to by the President of the Senate. The subjoined passages from both the address and reply, for reasons already given, will prove of interest. The Director, Señor RAMIREZ said:

"I experience the liveliest emotions of joy in witnessing once more the union of the representatives of the Nicaraguan people, after the terrible tempest which has passed over the country, and which at one time threatened not only to subvert its liberties, but to destroy its very existence as a civilized nation. Brighter days have succeeded to that period of confusion and fear, and we are now again enjoying the unspeakable blessings of peace. In view of this happy result, your satisfaction, Citizen Representatives, must equal my own; and I am sure that the desires for the future happiness and prosperity of Nicaragua which swell my own bosom, and to which words are too weak to give utterance, exist also in yours.

"We have undoubtedly arrived at a crisis in our national career. After unparalleled sufferings, heroically endured, our country has risen from the abasement to which many years of civil war and the ferocious passions of men had reduced it. But these evils have only passed away to give place to others scarcely less deplorable, resulting from foreign pretensions and aggressions. From these it is our obvious duty, not less than our only safety, to solicit the interposition of some powerful and friendly arm. Should this be generously extended in our favor, we may smile at the intrigues and harmless malice of the enemies of society and social order, which exist in our midst. We may then look forward with well-grounded anticipations of a glorious future. We may then devote our energies to the development of our almost limitless resources, to the promotion of commerce and industry, the revival of education, the improvement of our roads and our navigable lakes and rivers;—in fact, to all those grand and useful objects to which no government, unless at peace

with the world, and free from foreign interference and annoyance, can successfully devote its energies.

"For this relief we need not despair. We may yet be called upon to make sacrifices to secure it; but it must come with the successful prosecution of that grand enterprise of connecting the two great oceans, which is now occupying the paramount attention of the commercial world:—an enterprise which is not only fraught with immense results to trade, but which must work a total change in the political and moral relations of all the countries of the globe; the greatest work, not of this cycle alone, but of all ages.

"As a direct and essential step toward the consummation of this grand enterprise, with its train of consequences so important to our independence and prosperity, I have the honor to submit a Treaty of Alliance, Friendship, Commerce, and Protection, negotiated with the Honorable Plenipotentiary of the great and enlightened Republic of the United States of North America, and a contract for opening a Ship Canal, concluded between the agent of an American Company and this Government,—upon both of which you will be called to act, in conformity with the constitution."

The President of the Senate, Don Toribo Teran, responded to this address at length. The tenor of his remarks will appear from the following passages:

"Sir, this Assembly is actuated by the earnest desire of coöperating with the Executive in whatever shall promote the interests or the glory of the State; and offers its prayers to Heaven for light and guidance in the discharge of its intricate duties. It desires me to felicitate you upon the wisdom and firmness with which you discharged the responsible duties of your position during the late troubles, and which saved the State from the terrors which at one time impended on the political horizon. It congratulates you also upon the dignity and skill with which you have conducted the foreign relations of the country, which have raised it in the estimation of other and more powerful nations, and secured for it their sympathy and confidence.

"The efforts and sacrifices of the State in support of civil and social order have been great, but most happily successful; the hydra of anarchy is crushed, and, so far as the internal relations of our country are concerned, we look forward to a peaceful future, and a rapid and constant progress. To foreign pretensions and the territorial aggressions with which we have been persecuted, and which are now the only sources of disquiet

to the State, let us hope for the early interposition of that nation to which we have always been accustomed to look as a model for ourselves—a nation powerful, enlightened, and naturally called to defend our territory, in conformity with the great and glorious principle which it was the first to proclaim, and which finds a response in every American heart, viz.: that 'The American Continent belongs to Americans, and is sacred to Republican Institutions.' "

It will not be out of place to add here, that both treaty and contract were unanimously ratified, at the earliest moment, after passing through the forms prescribed by the constitution,—a proof of the confidence and friendship of the people and Government of Nicaragua, which we, as Americans, should never forget. The news of the event was everywhere received with extraordinary demonstrations of satisfaction and joy; and it is most earnestly to be desired that the hopes which it created may not, from the mistaken policy of Government, or the bad faith of companies, owing their very existence to Nicaraguan generosity, give place to despair, and respect be changed into contempt, and friendship into hate.

I had heard much in Leon of ancient monuments in the vicinity of Managua, and particularly of an ancient Indian temple cut in the solid rock, on the shore of a small lake, amongst the hills at the back of the city. I now learned that the lake was called Nihapa, and that upon the rocks which surrounded it were many figures, executed in red paint, concerning the origin of which nothing was known, but which were reported to be very ancient, "hechando antes la Conquista," made before the Conquest. The next morning, having meanwhile procured a guide, we started for this lake. The path, for a league, led through a beautiful level country, magnificently wooded, and relieved by open cultivated spaces, which were the hattos and huertas of the inhabitants of Managua. Nearly every one of these had a small cane hut, picturesquely situated amidst a group of palms or fruit trees, in its centre, reached by broad paths beneath archways

of plantains. Here the owners reside when weary of the town. We overtook hundreds of Indian laborers, with a tortilla and a bit of cheese in a little net-work bag thrown over one shoulder, pantaloons tucked up to the thighs, and carrying in the right hand, or resting in the hollow of the left arm, the eternal *machete*, the constant companion of every mozo, which he uses as an axe to clear the forest, a spade to dig the earth, a knife wherewith to divide his meat, and a weapon in case of attack. Passing the level country adjacent to the city, we came to the base of the hills which intervene between the lake and the sea. Here, at every step, traces of volcanic action met our view, and the path became rough and crooked, winding amongst disrupted rocks, and over broad beds of lava. The latter extended down the side of the ridge, showing that anciently there had existed a crater somewhere above us, now concealed by the heavy forest. The eruptions, however, must have taken place many centuries ago, for the lava was disintegrated at the surface, and afforded a luxuriant foothold for vines, bushes, and trees. For this reason, although we knew that we had attained an elevated position, we found it impossible to see beyond the evergreen arches which bent above us, and which the rays of the sun failed to penetrate. The ascent was steep, and our progress slow,—so slow that a troop of indignant monkeys, swinging from branch to branch, grimacing, and threatening vehemently, was able to keep pace with us. We fired our pistols at them, and worked up their feelings to a pitch of excitement and rage, humiliatingly like the ebullitions of humanity. These amusing denizens of the forest, I frequently observed, seem annoyed by the presence of white men, and will fret and chatter at their approach, while the brown natives of the country may pass and repass, if not without attracting their notice, at least without provoking their anger.

At the distance of about two leagues and a half from

Managua, we reached what appeared to be a broad, broken table-land, the summit of the dividing range intervening between the Lake and Ocean. We had not proceeded far, before we discovered a high conical peak, made up of scoriæ and ashes, and bare of trees, which had evidently been formed by the matter thrown out from some neighboring volcanic vent. Here our guide turned aside at right angles to our path, and clearing the way with his machete, in a few minutes led us to the edge of the ancient crater. It was an immense orifice, fully half a mile across, with precipitous walls of black and riven rocks. At the bottom, motionless and yellow, like a plate of burnished brass, was the lake of Nihapa. The wall of the crater, upon the side where we stood, was higher than at any other point, and the brain almost reeled in looking over its ragged edge, down upon the Acheronian gulf below. Upon the other side, the guide assured us there was a path to the water, and there too were the rock temple, and "los piedras pintadas." So we fell back into our path again, and skirting along the base of the cone of scoriæ to which I have referred, after a brisk ride of twenty minutes, came suddenly, and to our surprise, upon a collection of huts pertaining to a cattle estate. Here burst upon our sight an almost boundless view of mountain, lake, and forest. Behind us towered the cone of scoriæ, covered with a soft green mantle of grass. Upon one side yawned the extinct crater with its waveless lake; upon the other were ridges of lava, and ragged piles of trachytic rock, like masses of iron; while in front, in the foreground, stood the picturesque cane huts of the vaqueros, clustered round with tall palms and the broad translucent leaves of the plantain. But beyond all,—beyond the mountain slopes and billowy hills, shrouded with never-fading forests, among which, like fleecy clouds of white and crimson reflected in a sea of green, rose the tops of flowering trees,—beyond these, flashing back the light of the morning sun

from its bosom, spread out the Lake of Managua, with its fairy islets and distant, dreamy shores!

We left our horses at the huts, and followed a broad, well-beaten path which led to the point where the walls of the extinct crater were lowest. Here we found a narrow path between the rocks, barely wide enough to admit a horse to pass. It had in part been formed by man, probably before the Conquest, when, according to the early chroniclers, even these hills were thronged by a happy and industrious people. The descent for a few hundred feet was very steep, between high walls of rock. It then turned short, and ran along the face of the cliff, where fallen masses of stone afforded a foothold, and clinging trees curtained with vines concealed yawning depths and perilous steeps, which would otherwise have dizzied the head of the adventurous traveller. Near the bottom the path widened, and at the water's brink we reached a kind of platform, edged with rocks, where the cattle from the haciendas came down to drink, and whence the vaqueros of the huts obtained water for their own use. Here a few trees found root, affording a welcome shelter from the rays of the sun; for the breezes which fan the hill-sides never reach the surface of this almost buried lake.

The walls of the ancient crater are everywhere precipitous, and at the lowest point probably not less than five hundred feet in height. Except at the precise spot where we stood, the lake washed the cliffs, which went down, sheer down, to unknown depths. We looked up, and the clouds as they swept over seemed to touch the trees which crowned the lofty edges of the precipice, over which the vines hung in green festoons.

Upon the vertical face of the cliff were painted, in bright red, a great variety of figures. These were the "piedras pintadas" of which we had heard. Unfortunately, however, long exposure had obliterated nearly all of the paintings; but most conspicuous amongst those still retaining their out-

lines perfect, or nearly so, was one which, to me, had peculiar interest and significance. Upon the most prominent part of the cliff, some thirty or forty feet above our heads, was painted the figure of a coiled, plumed, or feathered ser-

LAKE NIHAPA—AN EXTINCT CRATER.

pent, called by the Indians "el Sol," the sun. Amongst the semi-civilized nations of America, from Mexico southward, as also amongst many nations of the old world, the serpent was a prominent religious symbol, beneath which was concealed the profoundest significance. Under many of its aspects it coincided with the sun, or was the symbol of the Supreme Divinity of the heathens, of which the sun was one of the most obvious emblems. In the instance of the painting before us, the plumed, sacred serpent of the abo-

rigines was artfully depicted so as to combine both symbols in one. The figure was about three feet in diameter, and is accurately represented in the accompanying Plate 1, Fig. 1. Above it, and amongst some confused lines of partially obliterated paintings, not represented in the sketch, was the figure of a human hand,—the red hand which haunted Mr. Stephens during all of his explorations amongst the monuments of Yucatan, where it was the symbol of the divinity KAB-UL, the Author of Life, and God of the Working Hand.[1]

Upon some rocks a little to the right of the cliff upon which is this representation of the serpent, there were formerly large paintings of the sun and moon, together, as our guide said, "con muchos geroglificos," with many hieroglyphics. But the section upon which they were painted, was thrown down during the great earthquake of 1838. Parts of the figures can yet be traced upon some of the fallen fragments. Besides these figures, there were traces of hundreds of others, which, however, could not be satisfactorily made out. Some, we could discover, had been of regular outline, and from their relative proportions, I came to the conclusion that a certain degree of dependence had existed between them. One in particular attracted my attention, not less from its regularity than from the likeness which it sustains to certain figures in the painted historical and ritual MSS. of Mexico. It is designated by FIG. 2, in the same Plate with the figure of the serpent already described.

Upon various detached rocks, lying next to the water,

[1] Those who feel interested in the subject of symbolism as it existed amongst the American semi-civilized nations, or as connected with their religions systems, will find it illustrated to a certain extent, in my work entitled "THE SERPENT SYMBOL AND THE WORSHIP OF THE RECIPROCAL PRINCIPLES OF NATURE IN AMERICA," in which particular prominence has been given to the worship of the serpent, so extensively diffused, and yet so enigmatical. These are subjects which it is not my design to discuss in a popular work like the present.

beneath trailing vines, or but half revealed above fallen debris and vegetable accumulations, we discovered numerous other outline figures, some exceedingly rude, representing men and animals, together with many impressions of the human hand. Some of these are represented in Plate II.

By carefully poising myself on the very edge of the narrow shelf or shore, I could discover, beyond an advanced column of rock, the entrance to the so-called excavated temple of the ancient Indians. I saw at once that it was nothing more than a natural niche in the cliff: but yet to settle the matter conclusively, I stripped, and, not without some repugnance, swam out in the sulphurous looking lake, and around the intervening rocks, to the front of the opening. It was, as I had supposed, a natural arch, about thirty feet high, and ten or fifteen feet deep: and seen from the opposite cliff, no doubt appeared to the superstitious Indians like the portal of a temple. The paintings of which they had spoken, were only discolorations produced by the fires which had once flamed up from the abyss where now slumbered the opposing element. Our guide told us that there were many other paintings on the cliffs, which could only be reached by means of a raft or boat. The next day M. returned with a canoe from Managua; it was got down with great difficulty, and in it we coasted the entire lake, but without discovering anything new or interesting.

We were told that there were alligators in this lake, but we saw none, and still remain decidedly skeptical upon that point, notwithstanding the positive assertions of the vaqueros. That it abounded in fish, however, we could not fail to discover, for they swarmed along the edge of the water, and at the foot of the cliffs. This lake was no doubt anciently held in high veneration by the Indians: for it is still regarded with a degree of superstitious fear by their descendants. Our guide told us of evil demons who dwelt within its depths, and vengefully dragged down the swimmers who

PAINTED ROCKS OF MANAGUA.—I.

ventured out upon its gloomy waters. It was easy to imagine that here the aboriginal devotees had made sacrifices to their mountain gods, the divinities who presided over the internal fires of the earth, or who ruled the waters. This half buried lake, with no perceptible opening, situated amidst melted rocks, on the summit of a mountain, with all of its accessories of dread and mystery, was well calculated to rouse the superstitious fears and secure the awe of a people distinguished above all others for a gloomy fancy, which invested nearly all of its creations with features of terror and severity,—creations whose first attribute was vengeance, and whose most acceptable sacrifices were palpitating hearts, torn from the breasts of human victims.

It was past noon before we had finished our investigations at the lake, and we returned to the huts of the vaqueros weary, hot, and hungry. The women—blessed hearts the world over!—swung hammocks for us in the shade, and we lay down in luxurious enjoyment of the magnificent view, while they ground the parched corn for the always welcome cup of *tiste*. And although when we came to leave, they charged us fully ten times as much for it as they would have required of their own countrymen, yet they had displayed so much alacrity in attending to our wants, that we sealed the payment with as hearty a "mil gracias," as if it had been a free offering.

Our guide took us back by a new path, in order to show us what he called the Salt Lake. It was not an extinct crater, like that of Nihapa, but one of those singular, funnel-shaped depressions, so frequent in volcanic countries, and which seem to have been caused by the sinking of the earth. It was a gloomy looking place, with a greenish yellow pool at the bottom, the water of which, our guide said, was salt and bitter. The sides were steep, and covered with tangled vines and bushes, and we did not attempt to descend.

There are other lakes, with musical Indian names, in the

vicinity of Managua, which closely resemble that of Nihapa, and owe their origin to similar causes. One of these occurs within a mile of the town, and is a favorite resort for the "lavadoras," or wash-women. It is reached by numerous paths, some broad and bordered with cactus hedges, and others winding through green coverts, where the stranger often comes suddenly upon the startled Indian girl, whose unshod feet have worn the hard earth smooth, and whose hands have trained the vines into festooned arches above his head. There is but one descent to this lake; which in the course of ages has been made broad and comparatively easy. The shore is lined with large trees of magnificent foliage, beneath the shadows of which the "lavadoras" carry on their never ending operations. The water is cool and limpid; and the lake itself more resembles some immense fountain, where bright streams might have their birth, rather than a fathomless volcanic pool, so well has nature concealed beneath a robe of trees, and vines, and flowers, the evidences of ancient convulsions, rocks riven by earthquakes, or melted by fires from the incandescent depths of the earth.

It was late in the afternoon when we returned from Nihapa; but whatever might have been the pleasure or satisfaction of our visit, it went for nothing as compared with that which we experienced in finding a courier from Granada, bringing us letters and papers from the United States, three months later than any we had yet received. Dinner was forgotten in the eager haste to learn what the great world had been about, all the time we had been vegetating amongst orange and palm trees in this secluded corner of the world. The trivial items of news which the dweller in Gotham, sipping his coffee over the morning papers, would pass by with an idle glance, were to us momentous matters, and every paragraph of every column was religiously read, with a gusto which no one but the traveller similarly situated can appreciate. The newspaper is a luxury which the poorest day

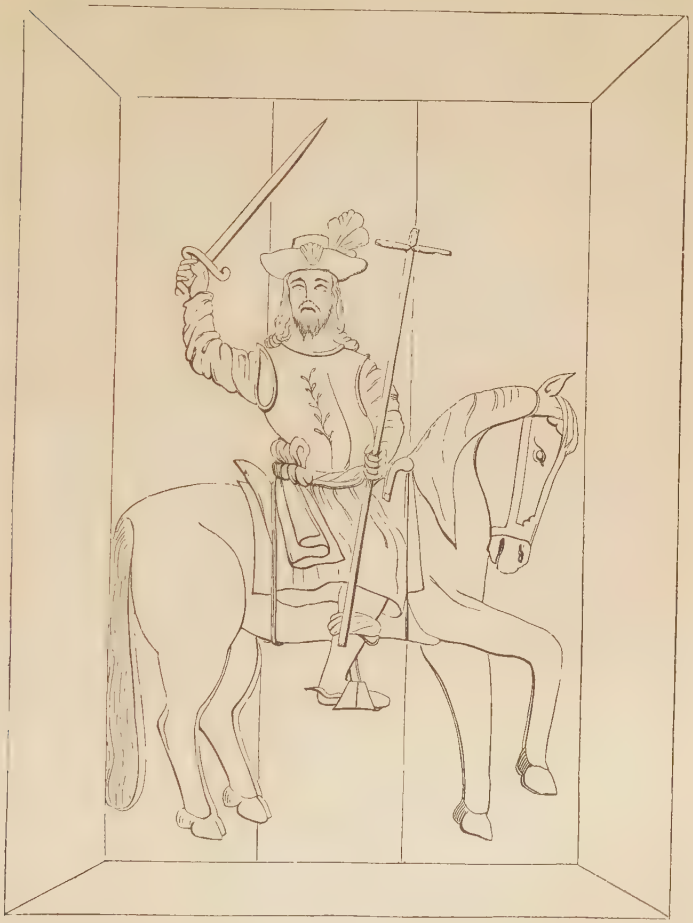
laborer in the United States may possess; and the American would sooner deny himself his tea and coffee, than the satisfaction of glancing over its columns, however dull, in the morning, or after the labors of the day are closed, in the evening. We missed many things, in Central America, which we had come to regard as essential to our comfort and happiness, but the newspaper most. Its place was very poorly supplied by the Padre Paul's little "Correo del Istmo," filled with government decrees, and published twice a month. It was in vain that we looked there for our daily home pabulum of "Late and Important by Telegraph"— "Terrible Catastrophe!" "Horrible Explosion, and Probable Loss of Life!" served up in delectable fat type, and profusely seasoned with exclamation points. For three months we had not had our souls harrowed by the awful details of murder, nor our hearts sickened by recitals of treachery, infamy, and crime; knew nothing of what had followed the Astor riot, whether the struggling Hungarians were free or fallen. In fact the great drama of life, with its shifting scenery, and startling denouements, so far as we were concerned, had been suspended,— the world had gone on, on, and it seemed as if we alone had been left behind,—though living, yet practically dead and forgotten. No romance, with its plots and highly colored incidents, in which fancy and invention had exhausted itself, could compare in point of interest with the columns of these newspapers, redolent with the damp mustiness of a sea voyage, and the tobacco of the courier's *maléta*, which we now perused in silence, by the aid of the tropical evening light, slowly swinging in our hammocks, beneath the corridor of Pedro Blanco's house, on the shores of the Lake of Managua!

Towards evening all the women of Managua go down to the lake shore, under the plausible pretext of filling their water jars. And when it became too dark to read, we fell into the movement, and followed by a train of youngsters, mostly

naked, also went down to the shore, which was enlivened by hundreds of merry groups—mozos bathing their horses out in the surf, and girls filling their water jars in the clear water beyond the breakers. At one point bushes were planted in the lake, like fish weirs, between which women were stationed with little scoop-nets, wherewith they ladled out myriads of little silvery fishes, from the size of a large needle to that of a shrimp, which they threw into kettle-shaped holes, scooped in the sand, where in the evening light, leaping up in their dying throes, they looked like a simmering mass of molten silver. These little fishes are called *sardinas* by the natives, and are cooked in omelets, constituting a very excellent dish, and one which I never failed to order whenever I visited Managua. The first travellers in Nicaragua mention this novel fishery as then practised by the aborigines, and it has remained unchanged to the present hour.

In returning through a bye street to our own house, we observed, within the open door of a rude cane hut, what we first took to be a large painting, but which upon examination proved to be a carving in wood. It was cut in high relief, and represented, nearly of the size of life, a mounted cavalier, dressed and armed after the style of the fifteenth century, having in one hand a cross and in the other a sword. We were struck with the spirit and execution of the carving, which filled one entire side of the hut, and were told that it was a representation of Hernando Cortez, the conqueror of Mexico. The people in whose possession it then was knew nothing of its history, beyond that it had been in the hands of their family for more than seventy years. I subsequently inquired of the "sabios" or sages of Managua about the figure, but they could give me no information, except that it was very ancient, and, according to tradition, represented Cortez. Don Pedro Blanco and some others suggested that it might have been intended for Santiago, the patron saint of Managua, but gave no good reason for their conjecture. That it is very

ancient appears from a variety of circumstances, and from none more clearly than the now half-obliterated paintings

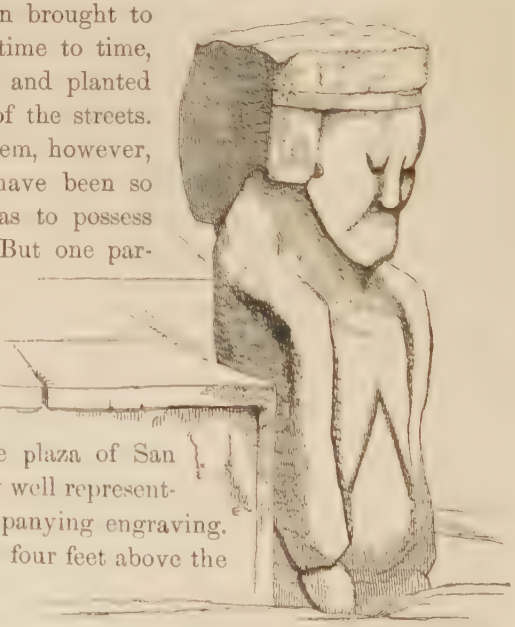


ANCIENT CARVING IN WOOD; MANAGUA.

which fill the panel around the figure. These, in style of execution, correspond entirely with the paintings made by the Indians immediately subsequent to the Conquest, and

after their first acquaintance with the whites. They represent disembarkations, and battles between mounted, bearded white men and naked Indians armed after their primitive fashion. Dogs too, are represented participating in these encounters,—mute witnesses to those atrocities which everywhere attended the Spanish arms in America, and to which all the brilliancy of the achievements of Cortez, Alvarado, Cordova, or Pizarro, can never blind the impartial historian. Notwithstanding the popular tradition, I am disposed to regard the figure as a representation not of Cortez, but of Cordova, the conqueror of Nicaragua, or its first Governor, Pedro Arias de Avila; perhaps of that daring Contreras who meditated the vast design of separating all America from the crown of Spain.

A number of idols, obtained from Momotombita and other places, have been brought to Managua, from time to time, by the Indians, and planted at the corners of the streets. Nearly all of them, however, are small, and have been so much defaced as to possess little interest. But one particularly arrested my attention. It is set at one of the corners of a house, fronting on the little plaza of San Juan, and is very well represented in the accompanying engraving. It projects about four feet above the ground, and probably extends



IDOL AT MANAGUA.

two or three feet below. In common with all others obtained from Momotombita, it is black basalt.

The town of Managua now contains about ten or twelve thousand inhabitants, who live in the simplest manner possible, manufacturing barely enough to supply their limited wants, and carrying on but little trade. The region around is very fertile, and capable of sustaining a large population. The hill-slopes, between the lake and the sea, are well adapted for the cultivation of coffee; and the quality of that which is produced from the few estates existing there, is regarded as superior to the coffee of Costa Rica, which ranks next only to the best Mocha. This valuable staple might be produced here to any extent, and at comparatively little cost; but the condition of the country, and the general lack of enterprise amongst the people, have prevented attention to this, as well as every other branch of industry or source of wealth. There is no part of Nicaragua which, from its position, beauty, salubrity, and capacity for production, surpasses the district around Managua;[1] and here, it seems to me, is the most favorable point for the commencement of any system of colonization from the United States or from Europe.

This portion of the country was densely populated in ancient times. After the expedition of Cordova, it was announced in Spain, that Managua was a city "nine miles long;" and this report of its extent and vast population, amongst other things, induced Oviedo to visit the country. He seems to have been disappointed in respect to its size,

[1] Capt. Belcher, who was here in 1838, says of Managua, that "it suffered severely in the late cholera visitation; losing six hundred out of the population of twelve thousand. Of this number it is rather remarkable that females between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five, and principally newly married, were the predominant victims. Generally this place is considered as peculiarly healthy, the average deaths seldom exceeding one per cent."—*Voyage round the World*, vol. i. p. 172.

and denounces the reports which had been made in Spain, as gross exaggerations. He nevertheless adds:

"It was inhabited by Chorotegans, and, to tell the truth, it was a beautiful and populous village, but so far from forming a city, was composed of isolated houses, at considerable distance from each other. Before it had been destroyed by war, it covered a great space, and resembled the villages to be seen in the valley of Alva, in Biscay, in Gallicia, among the mountains and valleys of Ibarra, where all the houses are in view of each other and occupy considerable room. This village of Managua extends in a line along the lake; but so far from having three leagues of extent, it scarcely has one. However, at the time of its prosperity, it was the finest place of the province, and contained 40,000 inhabitants, of which 10,000 were archers, or slingers. But when I visited it, six years after the Conquest, it was the most completely abandoned and desolate place of the government. It now contains 10,000 souls, of which 600 are archers. On the opposite side of the lake, is the domain of the Cazique, Tipitapa, which has an extent of six leagues, and 6,000 inhabitants, of which 800 are archers.

"In conclusion, from what I have heard from those who have visited this country from the times of Gil Gonzalez Davila to those of Captain Francisco Hernandez, the country was so populous that the inhabitants may be said to have fairly swarmed. But this is not the place to speak of the devastation of the country and the massacre of so many Indians."

From Managua we proposed to visit the Rio Tipitapa, or Panaloya, the stream which connects the lake of Managua with that of Nicaragua, and which, from the constant references made to it, in all speculations concerning the opening of a canal, has been invested with peculiar interest. We accordingly engaged Victorino, our patron in the expedition to Momotombita, to take us by water to the outlet of the lake, a distance of twenty or twenty-five miles. In order to have the entire day, or the greater part of it, to devote to our investigations at Tipitapa, we directed Victorino to be in readiness to start as early as two o'clock the next morning, thinking, from our past experience in native tardiness, that he would probably arrive at about four or five. But what

was our horror, when he aroused us in the early stages of our first doze (for we had gone to bed late), with the information that all was ready! It was just half-past one; and although I suspected that this early call was one of Victorino's practical jokes, yet we had been too precise in our directions to have any good cause of complaint against him. So we dressed ourselves silently, and followed the patron to the shore of the lake. Here we found everything in readiness, and got off, for the first time, at the appointed hour.

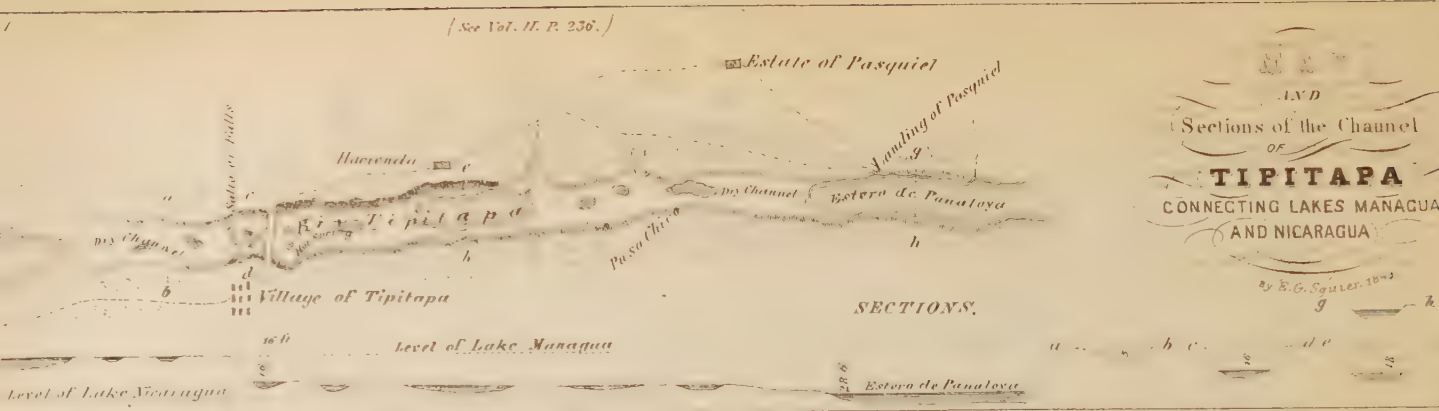
As I passed through the corridor, I had caught up a blanket, with a vague idea of getting a nap in the boat, and after we pushed off, wrapped myself in it with a chuckle, and lay down to sleep. But the blanket was saturated with fleas; sleep departed, and I was exercised in a most lively manner, for the rest of the night. The men rowed in silence, and the water of the lake looked black and forbidding under the sable sky. It was with a feeling of relief, therefore, that I discerned the tintings of morning, in the east. First, a faint light revealed the outlines of the rugged mountains of Chontales and Segovia, followed by a yellow, then a rosy tinge, so faint that it might have been a mere fancy of the spectator; then it deepened, and the clouds, with their glowing edges, and purple folds, disclosed their rich, deep masses above the rim of the horizon, while the lake flung back tremulously from its quivering bosom the reflected radiance of the sky. Brighter and brighter, its rays shooting upwards to the empyrean, and glowing on the summits of the volcanoes, higher and higher, came up the monarch sun, until rising above the horizon, he shone forth on the queenly earth, its emerald robes sparkling with dew-drops, and gemmed with flowers.

Our men had improved the time, and at sunrise we found ourselves within six or eight miles of the outlet, moving along half a mile distant from a low and densely wooded

shore. I thrust a pole over the side, and found that there was less than a fathom of water, with a soft muddy bottom. At various places I observed a slight bubbling on the surface of the lake, and a strong smell of sulphurous or mephitic gases; and in others rose little columns of vapor, indicating the presence of hot springs at the bottom.

We finally reached what appeared to be a narrow estuary of the lake, extending between two low bars, covered with reeds, and literally alive with cranes and other water fowls. The boat was directed into it, but it was so shallow that the mud rose to the surface with every stroke of the oars. I found, upon sounding, only two or three feet of water, with about an equal depth of soft gray mud—the dwelling-place of numerous alligators. We proceeded up this estuary for three or four hundred yards, the water every moment becoming shallower, until finally we stuck fast in the fetid mire. The crew leaped overboard and sunk at once to their armpits in the slime. They nevertheless pushed us some distance nearer the shore, and then, when the boat could be moved no further, we mounted on their shoulders and were carried to the land. We found the shore low, but gravelly, and covered with grass and bushes. A clear little stream of tepid water flowed at our feet, and at intervals all around us rose columns of vapor from thermal springs. We advanced a little further to what appeared to be a bank, covered with trees, and then discovered for the first time that the estero extended down a broad and rocky but shallow channel, which had anciently been the bed of the stream connecting the two lakes. No water flowed through it now, although there were pools here and there in the depressions of the rock, supplied with water from springs, or from the rains. Clumps of bushes were growing in the dry channel, and amongst them cattle and mules were grazing. I can readily believe that anciently, during the wet seasons, a small quan-

[See Vol. II. P. 236.]



AND

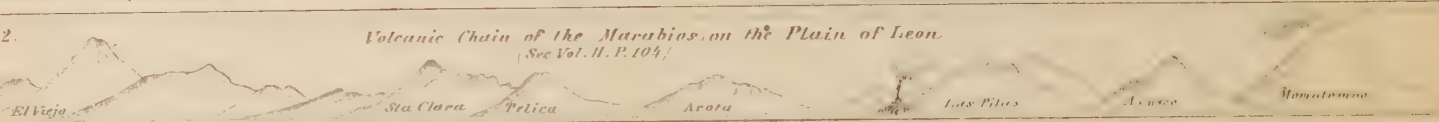
Sections of the Channel

OF

TIPITAPA

CONNECTING LAKES MANAGUA AND NICARAGUA

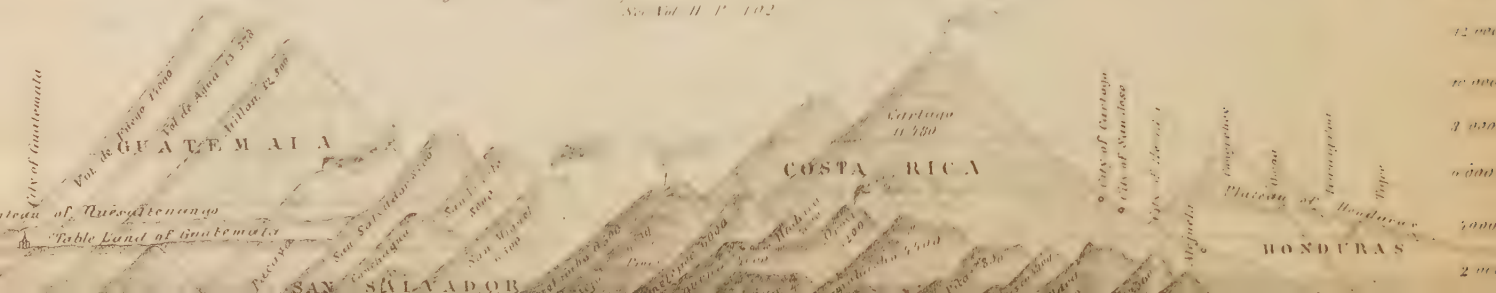
By E. G. Squier. 1849



TABLE

Showing the Comparative Heights of the Mountains of Central America.

[See Vol. II. P. 102.]



tity of water found its way through this channel, and over the falls, a mile below; but nothing is more evident than that no considerable body of water ever flowed here.

But if we were disappointed in the so-called outlet of the lake, our disappointment was more than compensated by the magnificent view which was afforded, from this point, of the great volcano of Momotombo, with its background of volcanic peaks, constituting the chain of the Maribios, and terminating with the tall Viejo, dim and blue in the distance. It seemed to rise from the bosom of the mirror-like lake, a giant guide to direct future navies across the continent from sea to sea. I could not help picturing the black hulls of great steamers trailing their smoky plumes at its base, and the white, cloud-like sails of majestic Indiamen, relieved against the purple of its arid sides.

After following along the bank of the vanished river for a short distance, we came to a path, by which the Brazil wood collected on the shores of the lake is carted to Pasquiel, the first and nearest landing point on lake Nicaragua. A rapid walk of a mile brought us to the village of Tipitapa, a miserable little place, of some two or three hundred inhabitants, with a tumble-down church or two, and a drove of cattle in quiet possession of the plaza. We found our way, with little trouble, to the house of the principal officer,—I have forgotten his rank,—a disagreeable fellow, who made himself unnecessarily offensive by one or two cross-grained attempts at being civil. He hadn't the decency to offer us breakfast; but that gave us little concern, for Ben had come supplied for contingencies, and had, moreover, a happy knack of pressing into his service many utensils and other articles of use which might come to hand. He despatched Victorino to the cura's for some milk, and helped himself to plantains from the garden. And after half an hour, which we had spent in drumming up horses, he announced a breakfast, if not fit for a prince, at any rate far from unacceptable to men who had started on

an exploring expedition at two o'clock in the morning. Through the aid of the cura, who was a fine looking man, with rather a singular expression, nevertheless, for a padre, we got horses for our ride to Pasquiel; and the cura, accompanied by a young darkey who was qualifying himself for the church, volunteered to accompany us. We had brought no saddles, and were obliged to put up with "albardos" and wooden stirrups. Albardos were not in existence in Job's day; had they been, he would have wished his enemy to ride on an albardo, rather than write a book. A savage critique in the Jerusalem Quarterly could not have "used up" Job's enemies more effectually than an "albardo" and a hard trotter.

After riding for half a mile through deserted fields, now overgrown with tall, rank weeds, we came once more to the channel or river-bed, at a place called the *Salto* or falls. Here the rock, which appears to underlie the whole region, is entirely exposed, worn into basins and fantastic pot-holes by the water. It seems to be a calcareous or volcanic breccia, and though not hard, is solid. Through this the hot springs find their way to the surface. The Salto is a steep ledge of this rock, from twelve to fifteen feet in height, extending entirely across the ancient channel, which is here not less than two hundred yards broad. Although it was now the middle of the rainy season, not a drop of water flowed over it. A little distance below the Salto is a stone bridge, the second one which I had seen in the country, and the only one in actual use. At the foot of its western buttress, upon the lower side, I observed a column of vapor, and descending, found that it proceeded from a copious hot spring, from which flows a considerable stream of scalding water. It has formed a thick deposit upon the rocks and stones around it, the apparent constituents of which were carbonate of lime, sulphur, and sulphate of copper; the taste of the water is not unpleasant, and, as observed by Capt. Belcher, is esteemed a sovereign remedy, "if taken by the advice of the padre!"

From the bridge we rode along the eastern bank of the ancient channel, which below the falls becomes deeper and narrower, filled with detached and water-worn rocks, with here and there large pools of still water. We found the country level, with a soil of exceeding fertility, and dotted over with cattle estates. It is not densely wooded, but has many open glades, covered with grass, and affording rich pasturage. Here Nicaragua wood, or Brazil wood, is found in greatest abundance, and contributes materially to the value of the land. It is a tree which seems to require a rich, moist soil, and the absence of overshadowing trees of other varieties. Quantities of the wood, already cut and prepared for exportation, were scattered here and there over the savannahs. A ride of three miles brought us to the cattle estate of Pasquiel, one of the largest and most valuable in the country, belonging to our friend Don Frederico Derbyshire, of Granada. We were well received by his superintendent, who had seen us in Granada, upon our first arrival. The buildings on the estate consisted of two immense roofs, supported on posts, entirely open at the sides, and placed in the centre of a kind of stockade of posts. In a corner of one of these sheds, a number of poles set on end and withed together, fenced off a little space for the beds of the mayordomo and his spouse. Ailing calves, independent pigs, and multitudinous chickens shared the remainder of the accommodations, on terms of perfect equality and harmony with the children of the superintendent. Some large troughs, supported on posts, to receive the milk in manufacturing cheese, and a couple of rude presses for use in the same manufacture, also mounted on stilts, completed the furniture of the establishment. There was enough of novelty in all this, but nothing particularly attractive; and as I suspected there might be a "smart chance" of fleas in the sand under the roofs, I declined dismounting, but rode beneath the shade of a gigantic tree, called the *mata-palo*, or kill tree. It has

great vigor, and preserves a dense green foliage during the dry season, when most other trees become seared. It starts as a kind of vine, and clasps itself around the first tree which it can reach; and as it grows with astonishing rapidity, in a few years it entirely destroys the tree which raised it from the ground, and occupies its place. It does not run up to any considerable height, but extends its branches laterally to a great distance, and like the banyan tree, sends down new trunks to the ground, which in their turn promote its vigor and its growth. These trunks come down with their roots ready formed, and look like a number of exceedingly bad brooms suspended from the principal limbs.

From the houses of the estate to the landing of Pasquiel there is a broad open road. The distance is little upwards of a mile. This landing is at the head of an estuary running up from the north-western extremity of Lake Nicaragua, in the direction of Lake Managua, and which is about fourteen miles in length. It is part of what is called the Rio Tipitapa, but is, in fact, the Estero de Pasquiel, or de Panaloya. The actual distance between the two lakes is therefore but little over four miles. The landing of Pasquiel is simply an open space on the bank of the Estero: there was neither house nor shed, nor sign of humanity, except several large piles of Brazil wood, and the ashes left by the sailors' fires. The Estero, at this point, is about one hundred yards broad, and six feet deep. This is, in fact, about its average depth; although in some places lower down, I was informed by the boatmen, it is as much as twelve and fourteen feet in depth.

There was very little to see; and so, after sitting on the shore for an hour, we started on our return, following a path which led along the bank of the Estero, with a view of determining how much higher it extended. We found that it came to an end a short distance above the landing, as did also our path. But we had started to go through, and per-

sisted in our purpose. Between cutting, and stooping, dismounting and making a multitude of evolutions, we finally succeeded in clearing the forest, well scratched and smarting from rough contact with thorny bushes and prickly vines—for nearly every petty bush and contemptible vine in Central America is armed with thorns, great or small.

Stopping for a few moments at a cattle hacienda, where we left the cura making love to the daughter of the mayor domo, we returned to Tipitapa. Our gloomy host of the morning had mustered up a little good humor. The secret of his civility, however, came out before we left; he wanted a guitar, a guitar with four strings, a guitar withal worth seven dollars; and expected us to send him one of that description from the United States, which we, of course, promised to do, whereupon, in the fullness of his heart, he ordered his servant to assist Ben in preparing dinner.

At three o'clock, we had reëmbarked, and with a fair wind, were soon speeding our way to Managua, where we landed in the edge of the evening, well wearied with our day's excursion.

In returning, I had sounded the lake, and found the entire bay in front of Managua exceedingly shallow. For nearly a mile out it was only about a fathom in depth; and for full two miles further it preserved a uniform depth of about two fathoms. That part nearest the old outlet of Tipitapa was also shallow, and for a mile and upwards from the shore, nowhere exceeded a fathom and a half in depth. The middle portions of the lake, however, are represented to be very deep. The full statement of these facts and of a variety of others, bearing upon the question of a canal route, are reserved for another and more appropriate place, when I come to speak specifically of the canal project. It is only necessary to add here, that the grossest ignorance prevails as to the dependence between the two lakes of Nicaragua and Managua, and the nature of the communication one with the other. The publications of

the British Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge speak of Lake Nicaragua as *flowing* into Lake Managua; and nearly all geographical works refer to the river Tipitapa, or Panaloya, as a considerable stream, navigable were it not for the Salto or falls, which is almost uniformly represented to be nearer Lake Nicaragua than to Lake Managua. There is also an error prevalent amongst the natives of the country, which has been inconsiderately adopted by some recent observers, that the lake of Managua has formed a subterranean outlet, or has subsided, from some unexplained cause, within the past fifteen or twenty years. There is, however, little or no reason for supposing that any material or perceptible change has taken place in the level of the lake, or any diminution in its volume, since the period of the Conquest. The early explorers represented the two lakes as entirely disconnected; and Oviedo, although combatting this idea, nevertheless describes the communication to be very nearly what it now is. He says that in summer little water flows through the channel, and speaks of the "canal," by which is undoubtedly meant the Estero of Panaloya, as only breast deep. That the level of the lake changes somewhat with the different seasons, I can myself bear witness. The evaporation on the twelve hundred square miles of surface which this lake presents, beneath a tropical sun, is nevertheless quite sufficient to account for the absence of water at Tipitapa, without entertaining the hypothesis of a subterranean outlet.

A few days after, I was suddenly called to return to Leon, where I was detained by official business until the close of November. The events which transpired in the interval do not fall within the scope of my Narrative, and I shall consequently pass them by without remark.

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THE dry season had now fairly commenced; for two weeks no rain had fallen on the plains of Leon, except an occasional "aguacéro" which sprinkled out its brief existence under the lee of the volcanoes. The circumstances

were now favorable for carrying out my long cherished purpose of again visiting Granada, and from thence prosecuting my investigations of the antiquities reported to exist in its vicinity, and in the islands of Lake Nicaragua. Locking up the main wing of my house, and handing over my keys to Padre Cartine for safe keeping, with no other companions than M. and my servant, I set out on the expedition.

It was just daybreak when we rode through the suburb of Guadaloupe, but already the Indians were yoking their oxen and preparing for their day's work. Here we overtook Don Felipe Jauregui, Commissioner of Honduras, who had started for Costa Rica, and who felicitated himself greatly on having our company during part of his journey. But Don Felipe had a servant with the mules and a led horse for emergencies, and valued time at its current rate in Central America, where it never rules at a premium. He had a long journey before him, and meant to take it easily. So, before we had gone a league, after trying in vain to seduce his horse into a pace, I took advantage of a little bend in the road to give him the slip, nor did I see anything more of him until the next day, in the evening, when he overtook us at the town of Masaya.

I never wearied of the ride to Pueblo Nuevo, and thence along the shores of Managua to Matcaras; nor would the reader weary of its repeated description, could my pen truly portray its charms. The afternoon was still, and the beach, upon which the tiny waves toyed with a low, musical murmur, was cool in the broad shadows of the cliffs which bordered it upon the west, and crowned with verdure, shut off the rays of the evening sun. My old friends, the long-legged cranes, were there, distant and grave as usual, and clearly in bad humor at these repeated intrusions. And when we dismounted and took a bath in the lake, they audibly expressed their dissatisfaction, and marched off a few rods, where they held an indignation meeting, in company

with a rabble of water-hens and disreputable "zopolotes." I had great contempt for them ever after that.

We reached Matearas at sunset, and "put up" at the house of Don Henrique's pet. She inquired about our friend, and felt "very desolate," she said, because he had not sent her some pills he had promised—for be it known, every foreigner in Central America is more or less a "medico." The little naked fellow for whom Don Henrique had stood sponsor, was tumbling about the floor, engaged in a pretty even contest with two pigs and three chickens, about a piece of tortilla. The pigs appeared most afflicted, and squealed in a distressful way because of their ill success. Our little hostess did not take the trouble to interfere, but gave "aid and comfort" to her boy, by keeping off a matronly porker, evidently deeply interested, which stood looking in at the door-way. I could not help laughing at the group, but my merriment puzzled the poor woman exceedingly. She looked at me inquiringly, blushed, and drew forward a large reboso, which was thrown loosely over her shoulders, so as to conceal her figure. I saw her mistake at once, and hastened to correct it in the most direct manner, for in these countries it is the only way of preserving a good understanding. A tear glistened in her eye, while a smile lit up her face, as she replied in a touching tone, "A thousand thanks, Señor; we are very poor people, and cannot afford to be laughed at." She told me with the greatest frankness how soon another god-father would be wanted, and as she had had a Frenchman for the first, she should "so like" to have an American for the second. I assured her that I should be happy to serve, if I could make it convenient to be there at the proper time. A few minutes afterwards, I overheard her telling the gossiping female neighbors who had "dropped in," that the thing was all settled. "El Ministro del Norte" was to be sponsor for the prospective immortal, "seguro! seguro!" sure! sure! How proudly the little woman moved about the rest of the

evening! She superintended all the details of supper, and *when I went to bed on the table*, would have substituted her pillow, the only one in the house, for my saddle, had I permitted her. That table! There is but one thing harder under the sun, and that is Don Pedro Blanco's bed of hide!

After this intimation, I need not add that I was not exactly "lapped in Elysium" during the night. It was not so much the fault of the table, as of some arrieros, stopping at the hut over the way, who had got together the belles of the village, and with the aid of aguardiente, a guitar, and two tallow candles, were making a night of it. I sat up several times to look at them through the little square window over the table. Various groups of dancers were whirling around a man playing the guitar, a gay mestizo with a red sash around his waist and his hat set jauntily on one side, who performed with all the vigor of "the bones," in the *Opéras Ethiopiennes*, and from the shouts of laughter which followed some of the hits, evidently improvising the song with which he accompanied the music. Some of these hits, I infer, were personal, for suddenly a strapping yellow girl, in a dashing flounce, flung herself out of her partner's arms, and seizing the performer's hat, flung it under her feet. The next instant she had him by the hair;—there was a tustle, a mingled sound of laughter, supplication, and abuse, in the midst of which the table was upset, and the lights extinguished. I flattered myself this was the final "grand tableau." Delusive hope! Half an hour of violent discussion ensued, in which the voice of the Amazon was highest, and then the *entente cordiale* seemed restored. Looking out of the window, I saw the man of the guitar in his former place, and everything going on as before. I presume, however, that the *improvisor* was now more respectful in his allusions.

We left before sunrise the next morning, deferring breakfast until our arrival at Managua, twenty miles distant. I rode ahead, and allowed my horse to take his own course.

Upon reaching the volcanic ridge which I have mentioned as projecting into the lake, where the mule road diverges from the round-about *caminoreal*, he entered the wrong path, and we went on for half an hour before discovering the error. I then determined to push ahead, whatsoever the consequences. We soon came to a clearing, and a little beyond, to a number of huts, standing upon the very brow of the mountain, and looking out upon the lake, and beyond its shores, to the hills of Chontales. I involuntarily spurred my horse forward. It was the broadest, most luxuriant view upon which my eye had ever rested. That from Laurel Hill, descending the Alleghanies, is alone comparable to it, but lacks the grand and essential elements of lakes, volcanoes, and tropical verdure. The morning breeze swept fresh and exhilarating past us, and our very horses lifted their heads, and with expanded nostrils and ears thrown forward, seemed to drink in the cool air, and to enjoy the surprise and the scene not less than ourselves.

We were several times saluted with "buenas mañanas caballeros!" by a short, merry-faced old lady, the mistress of the huts, before we had the gallantry to turn from the scene to the señora. Two or three naked boys, with bows and arrows and cerbatanas or blowing-tubes, stood beside her, and a couple of grown girls peeped slyly at us from behind the broken door of the principal hut. The old lady was a sympathetic body, and her face was really brilliant with animation, as she exclaimed "buena vista, cabelleros!" prolonging the "vees-ta," as she swept her hand in the direction of the distant horizon. This "hatto," she said, was called "Santa Maria de Buena Vista," and she was the mistress. These, she added, are my niños, boys, and these "malditas," pointing to the girls who dodged out of sight, are my "*hijas grandes*," my big girls. "Venga!" come here, she ejaculated; but the girls wouldn't come, whereupon the old lady went into the house and dragged them out. One was fair, with

light hair and blue eyes, while the other, like her mother, was a brunette, her dark eyes, half shadowed by her long curling hair, fairly dancing with suppressed mischief. I had long before ceased to be surprised at wide differences of color and features in the same family; but the contrast here was so striking that I could not help exclaiming interrogatively "*ambas?*" *both?* "Si!" she answered, with emphasis: "esta negrita," this darkey, is my husband's, "y esta blanquita es una Francescita!" and this white one is French! The inference from this *naive* confession was so obvious a reflection on the old lady's honor, that I thought it but decent not to understand it, and modestly suggested, "Ah si, su compadre fue Frances," ah yes, her god-father was French! "No, su padre—padre!" no, her father, father, interrupted the matron, with energy; "I was young once," she added, after a pause, and with a toss of the head, which made me repent my ill-timed suggestion. Ah! the perfidious Frenchman who had abused the hospitalities of "Santa Maria de Buena Vista!" The wretch had evidently a taste for the picturesque.

The old lady inquired how I liked the place: I was, of course, delighted. "Very well," said she, buy it:" and she went on to enumerate its advantages, making the most of the view. I suggested that there was no water; but that she said was of slight importance, it was only a mile to the lake —she had got water there for fourteen years, and there was plenty of it, as we could see. Besides, I could have either one of her girls to bring it for me; *both* if I liked; and all for a hundred dollars! But the concluding argument confounded me; she communicated it in a whisper. The Norte Americanos were building a canal, and in a few months, Buena Vista would be worth four times the money! I took off my hat incontinently, and only regretted that the old lady had no lithographic press, wherewith to convert Buena Vista into town lots! I promised to consider the proposition —particularly so far as it related to the "negrita," and the

"blanquita," both of whom, I wished to have it distinctly understood, were to be included, because it was more than one ought to do, to bring *all* the water from the lake. The old lady admitted the force of the argument, and gravely assented. The final arrangement was deferred until my return. One of the boys pointed out the path, down the face of the mountain to the lake; we had only to follow the shore, he said, to reach Managua. I asked how far it was,—"hay no mas!" "there is no more, it is only a step," he replied, and we left him in high spirits, thinking we had really discovered a short cut, instead of having gone two leagues out of our way. The path to the edge of the lake was steep, but well-worn, and we descended without much difficulty. The beach was broad and smooth, and on a little knoll, covered with grass, and arched with trees, was the place where the women of Buena Vista did their washing. The huts, as we looked up, seemed perched on the edge of a precipice, and with the palms that surrounded them, stood out in sharp relief against the sky. Cattle from the pasturage grounds were loitering in the edge of the water; there was a donkey, grave but stubborn, which a half-grown boy was trying to drive somewhere, but which not only wouldn't go, but kicked viciously when the muchacho approached. The boy seemed almost ready to cry with vexation, and begged I would shoot the obstinate brute, which he denounced, not only as "sin verguenza," but as a great many other things, which would hardly bear translating. We left him stoning the "burro," at point blank distance, just out of the range of his heels; and if neither one has given in, they may be there still.

The shore was hard and smooth, and our horses moved along, the waves dashing to their fetlocks, with an elastic and nervous action, in which the merest clod must have sympathized. Occasionally arching their necks, and lifting up their heads, their whinny was like the blast of a trumpet! Ah, my noble gray—with thy clear eye, expanded nostrils,

taper ears, and the veins swelling full on thy arching neck!—son of Arabian sires! hast thou forgotten that morning's ride on the shores of Managua? Wine may quicken the blood with an unnatural, evanescent flow; the magic hakshish stupify the frame, and for the moment make the tense nerves vibrate to the melodies of the spirit world,—but give me a free rein, and the willing back of my Arab gray, and the full, expanding, elevating intoxication of a tropical morning!

On, on, we seemed to float along the edge of the lake. By-and-by the hills came down like barriers to the water. Here we scrambled for awhile amongst rough rocks, cutting vines and branches right and left with our swords, and emerged on the shore of a little bay. Two men, up to their arm-pits in the water, were throwing a cast-net near the rocks, while a third trailed after him what appeared to be a long branch of the palm tree, but which was a cord, whereon the fishes were strung. He towed it ashore, at our request, and showed us some hundreds of beautiful fish, most of them of a species resembling our rock-bass, and about the size of a small shad. I asked the price—ten for a *medio*, or sixpence! We declined purchasing, whereupon he offered ten for a *quartillo*, equal to three cents. I then told him we did not wish to buy, but that there was a *real* to drink the health of los Americanos.

We had now come more than a league, and I began to think as it had been "*hay no mas*" to Managua at Buena Vista, we must be near the place. We were now told "*esta aqui*," "it is here, you are in it;" which we afterwards found to mean that it was only six miles further. After much experience, I came to understand that "*hay no mas*," "there is no more," or it is no further, is a figurative way of saying from nine to twelve miles; and "*esta aqui*," "it is here," from six to nine. "Una legua," a league, I may add, for the benefit of uninitiated travellers, may be calculated at plea-

sure, at from a mile and a half, to five miles,—"you pays your money, and you takes your choice!"

Another league along the lake shore, occasionally turning a rocky headland, and we came to a large plantain walk, from which a broad path diverging to the right, assured us that we were approaching the city. The path was as smooth and as clear as a race course, and our horses, who had been in high spirits all the morning, struck at once into a fast gallop. I bent down on my steed's neck, to avoid the branches of the trees, and gave him a loose rein. It was a very undignified race, no doubt, on the part of the riders, but both gray and bay enjoyed it, and so did we, by sheer force of sympathy. We met numbers of people going to their *huertas*, who leaped out of the path as we went scurrying along. Some cried "*hoo-pah!*" and others ejaculated something, in which I could only distinguish "*borracho*"—"*drunk!*" But *that* was a mistake.

We dashed into the plaza of Managua, with steaming steeds, and rode to the posada. It was not nine o'clock, yet we had ridden twenty-six miles. We ordered breakfast, and it was quite ready before Ben came trotting up on his mule. He was in bad humor, and I couldn't blame him, for it was shabby to leave him alone in the chapparal.

At eleven, when we started for Masaya, the sky was clouded but it did not rain, and we rode at a rapid pace over the intervening thirty-six miles. Again we paused on the "mal pais" of the volcano, and looked down upon its broad, desolate fields—doubly black and desolate under a lowering sky. Again we lingered in the noiseless streets of sweet, embowered Nindiri, born of the lake and mountain,—and at four o'clock entered the suburbs of Masaya.

I had a letter to a gentleman, who, for reasons which will duly appear, shall be nameless, and inquired for his residence. In reaching it, we had to go through the plaza; it afforded a striking contrast to the appearance it had worn

when we passed it before. The closed shops were now open, and flaunting with gayly-colored goods—groups of people with laden mules were scattered in every direction, and women with dulces stepped across it with the precision of grenadiers! A procession consisting of a boy ringing a little bell, and followed by some musicians and a priest, was just emerging from the great church, on its way to administer the last rites of religion to the dying. The hum of voices was stilled on the instant; every head was uncovered and every knee bent, as the little procession moved by on its mission of consolation and mercy; another moment, and the current of life and action flowed on as if nothing had occurred.

The house where we were to stop was a very good one, and we rode at once into the court-yard. A lady, fat and fair, and not without pretensions to beauty, was seated in the corridor. She invited us to dismount, which we did, and I handed her my letter of introduction. She looked at the direction, and said it was for her husband, who had gone out; she would give it to him on his return. I suggested that she had better read it; but, singular woman, "she never read her husband's letters!" She nevertheless showed a distant relationship to the sex, by depositing it in her bosom—the bosom of her dress. Perhaps she had the ability, in common with certain maiden ladies of New-England, of taking in the contents by a mystical process of magnetic absorption. It wasn't pleasant to sit waiting in the corridor; we had not come to make a call, but to stop for the night, and all the next day, and after waiting a reasonable time for an invitation, I told Ben to unsaddle the horses, and place our baggage in the corridor. The mistress looked a little puzzled, but said nothing. In fact the whole affair was getting to be awkward; so I suggested to M., that pending the return of our proposed host, we should visit the lake.

The first man we met in the street proved to be one of the

identical alcaldes who were in such a fever to ring the bells, when we had passed through, six months before. He at once volunteered to accompany us to the lake, and took the lead with a magisterial air, as if heralding royalty, bringing his golden-headed cane down at every step with an emphasis which struck terror into all the muchachos within a square of him. Occasionally he would stop to point out to us, or to explain, some object of interest. *That* house, he said, the door and windows of which were riddled with bullets, had been the rendezvous of the "facciosos" during the late disturbances. The prefect having got wind of their meetings, silently surrounded it with soldiers, and the first intimation the conspirators had of danger, came with a hundred bullets through their doors and windows, and was followed by a charge of the bayonet—a mode of proceeding I thought sufficiently decided for any latitude! That house, falling into ruins, and surrounded by rank weeds, that was the house of a man who had murdered a padre; the bishop had cursed the spot, and it was fenced in with posts, so that stray porkers might not fall under ban by entering its crumbling portal! Those extraordinary clumps of flowers, looking like mammoth golden epaulettes, were flowers of the coyol palm—and those brown shells, each half shaped like a canoe, and almost as large, those were the cases in which the flower had matured. And thus our guide went on, marching us the while down a broad avenue, thronged with water carriers, in the direction of the lake. I observed that the jars here were not carried on the head, but in a kind of net-work sack, suspended on the back by a broad and gayly woven strap passing around the foreheads of the bearers, who came up panting and covered with perspiration.

Half or three-quarters of a mile from the plaza, we came to the edge of the immense sunken area, at the bottom of which is the lake. Like the "Laguna de Salinas," near Granada, and which I have already described, it is sur-

rounded by precipitous cliffs, except upon the side of the volcano, opposite the city, where the lava has flowed over, and made a gradual but rough and impassable slope to the water. The first stage of the descent is by a broad flight of steps, sunk in the solid rock, terminating in an area, fenced by a kind of balustrade, or parapet, of the same material. I looked over this, and below was a sheer precipice, from which I recoiled with a shudder. Here stands a little cross firmly fixed in the rock. The path now turns to the right, winding along the face of the declivity, here cut in the cliff, there built up with masonry, and beyond secured by timbers, fastened to the trees, many of which are of gigantic size, covered with vines, and twining their gnarled roots in every direction among the rocks. These rocks themselves are burned and blistered with heat, with vitrified surfaces of red or black, resembling the hardest enamel. Were it not for the verdure, which hides the awful steeps and yawning depths, the path would prove a fearful road for people of weak heads and treacherous nerves, whose confidence in themselves would not be improved by the crosses which, fastened among the stones, or against the trees, point out the places of fatal catastrophes. Our guide advised us to take off our boots before commencing the descent, and the women whom we met slowly toiling up, in many places holding on by their hands, panted "*quita sus botas!*" —"take off your boots!" But we were more used to boots than they, and kept them on—not without subjecting ourselves to a suspicion of fool-hardiness. Down, catching glimpses of the lake, apparently directly beneath us, and as distant as when we started,—down, down,—it was full fifteen or twenty minutes before we reached the bottom. Here were numerous places among the fallen rocks and the volcanic debris of the cliff, where the *aguadoras* filled their jars. Many of these were bathing in the water, carrying their jars out several rods from shore, filling them there and then towing

them in. They did not appear at all disconcerted by our presence, so we sat down on the rocks and talked with the brown Naiads. I asked one of them if the lake was deep? She replied that it was "insondable," bottomless; and to give me practical evidence of its great depth, paddled ashore, and taking a large stone in each hand, went out not more than thirty feet, and suffered herself to sink. She was gone so long that I began to grow nervous, lest some accident had befallen her in those unknown depths, but directly she popped up to the surface, almost in the very place where she had disappeared. She gasped a moment for breath, and then, turning to me, exclaimed, "you see!"

The water is warm, but limpid, and, it is said, pure. When cooled, it is sweet and palatable. Considering that the lake is clearly of volcanic origin, with no outlet, and in close proximity to the volcano of the same name, this is a little remarkable. Most lakes of this character are more or less impregnated with saline materials.

The view of the lake, and the volcano rising on the opposite shore, from the place where we were seated, was singularly novel and beautiful. Above us towered a gigantic ceiba, festooned with vines, amongst which a company of monkeys were scrambling, chattering, and grimacing. Occasionally one would slip down the long, rope-like tendrils of the vines, scold vigorously for a moment, and then, as if suddenly alarmed, scramble up again amongst the branches. The girls said they were specially indignant at us because we were "blancos," and we had afterwards the most conclusive, if not the most savory, evidence of their dislike, which it would be indelicate to explain. Suffice it to say, we registered a vow to return the next day with our guns, and teach the ill-bred mimics better manners.

The cliffs which wall in the lake resemble the Palisades on the Hudson river, but are much higher, and destitute of the corresponding masses of debris at the base. The early

Spanish chroniclers speak of them as a "thousand fathoms" high; later travellers have changed the fathoms to yards, but even that is probably an exaggeration. We had no means of determining the question, and wouldn't have gone down again, after once regaining the upper earth, to have solved it a thousand times. The descent was mere *bagatelle*, but the ascent one of those things which answer for a lifetime, and leave no desire for repetition. We reached the upper cross after a most wearisome scramble, only fit for monkeys to undertake, and sat down on the last flight of stone steps, wholly exhausted, covered with perspiration, and our temples throbbing from the exertion, as if they would burst. The *aguadoras*, accustomed to it from infancy, seemed to suffer almost as much as ourselves, and as they passed the cross, made its sign in the usual manner, in acknowledgment of their safe return.

All the water for domestic purposes is thus painfully brought up from the lake. During the "*invierno*" the rain is collected in tanks, or ponds, in the courts of the principal houses, for the use of the horses and cattle; but when this supply becomes exhausted, as it does towards the close of the dry season, the water for their use has also to be obtained here. An attempt had been made to cut a path for mules down the face of the cliff, but it had failed. About two leagues from Masaya, however, the people had met with better success, and there is now a place where animals, with some difficulty, can reach the lake. There are a number of towns, besides Masaya, which obtain their water from the same source. These towns existed, and the same practice prevailed, before the Conquest, when the country was tenfold more populous than now. Water-carrying seems to have always been one of the principal institutions of this section of country, and as there are no streams, and never will be, it is likely to remain about the only enduring one, or until some enterprising Yankee shall introduce a grand

forcing pump, worked, perhaps, by volcanic power—for, having made the lightning a "common carrier," I do not see why volcanoes shouldn't be made to earn their living!

Oviedo has described this lake as it was in 1529, and it will be seen that it has little changed since then. His estimate of the height of the cliffs surrounding it, about one thousand feet, is probably not far from the truth.

"Another very remarkable lake is found in this province, although it cannot be compared, in extent, with *Cocibolca* (Nicaragua). The water is much better. It is called the lake of *Lendiri* (Nindiri or Masaya), and the principal cazique, who lives on its banks, bears the same name. This lake is about three leagues from Granada, but they are so long that we may safely call them four. I arrived there on St. James' day, July 25, 1529, and stopped with Diego Machuca, the same gentleman of whom I have spoken heretofore. I was well received and hospitably entertained, and I went with him to visit this lake, which is a very extraordinary one. To reach it, we had to take a road, the descent of which is so rapid that it should be called rather a stairway than a road. Adjoining it we saw a round, high mountain, on the summit of which is a great cavity, from which issues a flame as brilliant but stronger and more continuous than that of Etna, or Mount Gibel, in Sicily. It is called the Volcano of Masaya. Towards the south an arid and open slope extends to the shores of the lake; but on the other sides, the lake is shut in by walls, which are very steep and difficult of descent. I beheld a path, as I was led along, the steepest and most dangerous that can be imagined; for it is necessary to descend from rock to rock, which appear to be of massive iron, and in some places absolutely perpendicular, where ladders of six or seven steps have to be placed, which is not the least dangerous part of the journey. The entire descent is covered with trees, and is more than one hundred and thirty fathoms before reaching the lake, which is very beautiful, and may be a league and a half both in length and breadth. Machuca, and his cazique, who is the most powerful one in the country, told me that there were, around the lake, more than twenty descents worse than this by which we had passed, and that the inhabitants of the villages around, numbering more that one hundred thousand Indians, came here for water. I must confess that, in making the descent, I repented more than once of my enterprise, but persisted, chiefly from shame of avowing my fears, and partly from the encouragement of my companions, and

from beholding Indians loaded with an aroba and a half of water. (nearly 40 lbs.) who ascended as tranquilly as though travelling on a plain. On reaching the bottom, I plunged my hand into the water, and found it so warm that nothing but intense thirst could have induced me to drink it. But when it is carried away, it soon cools, and becomes the best water in the world to drink. It seems to me that this lake must be on a level with the fire that burns in the crater of Masaya, the name of which, in the Chorotegan language, signifies the burning mountain. But one species of fish, as small as a needle, is found here; they are cooked in omelets. The Indians esteem the water very good and healthful, and when they go down, are sure to bathe in it. I asked the cazique why they did not bring fish from other places and put in it? He replied that they had done so several times, but the water rejected them, and they died, diffusing a fetid odor, and corrupting the water. Among the descents, there was one formed of a single ladder of ropes from top to bottom. As there is no water for several leagues around, and the country is fertile, they put up with the inconvenience, and obtain their supply from this lake."

The little fishes found here are the same with those called *sardines* at Managua, and which I have described in another place.

It was dusk when we returned to the plaza, which was now filled with people, presenting the most animated appearance that it is possible to conceive. It was market evening, and every one who had aught to buy or to sell, was on the ground, exhibiting his wares, or in search of what he wanted. I have said that Masaya is distinguished for its manufactures, and we now had the opportunity of learning their variety and extent. Upon one side of the plaza stood mules loaded with grass or sacate, wood carefully split and bound up in bundles like faggots, maize, and the more bulky articles of consumption. Near by were carts overflowing with oranges, melons, aguacates, jocotes, onions, yucas, papayas, and the thousand blushing, luscious fruits and vegetables of the country, going at prices which we regarded as absolutely ruinous, while las vendedoras chanted:

"Tengo narangas, papayas, jocotes,
Melones de agua, de oro, zapotes,
Quieren á comprar?"

"I have oranges, papayas, jocotes,
Melons of water, of gold,[1] and zapotes,
Will you buy?"

Here were women seated on little stools beside snow-white sheets, or in the centre of a *cordon* of baskets, heaped with cacao or coffee, starch, sugar, and the more valuable articles of common use; here a group with piles of hats of various patterns, hammocks, cotton yarn, thread of pita, native blankets, petates, and the other various articles which Yankees call "dry goods;" here another group, with water jars, plates, and candlesticks of native pottery; there a *sillero* or saddler exposed the products of his art, the *zapatero* cried his shoes, the *herrero* his machetes, bits for horses, and other articles of iron; girls proclaimed their dulces, boys shouted parrots and monkeys, and in the midst of all a tall fellow stalked about bearing a wooden-clock from Connecticut, in his arms, gaudily painted, with the picture of the sun on the dial, which seemed to tip us a familiar wink as I inquired the price. Unfortunate inquiry! "Quarenta pesos: barato, barato, muy barato!" "Forty dollars; cheap, cheap, very cheap!" And the wretch followed us everywhere with that abominable clock. "Sir," said I at last, "I make clocks, and will bring one here and sell it for five dollars, if you do not stop your noise!" Whereupon he marched off, still crying, "Un relox esplendidisimo, quiera á comprar!" Wherever we passed, we were stunned with the mercaders, who fairly hustled us, in their anxiety to thrust their various wares full in our faces. The hackmen at a steamboat landing could not be worse. Directly the alcalde, who had gone off to collect his official associates, rejoined us; and then, amidst

[1] Musk melons, or melones almizcleños.

the bustle of the market, we had ten minutes of laborious bowing and speechifying, much to the edification of the people, no doubt, who piled themselves up around us, full twenty deep. I had been enjoying myself mightily, but all was done for now, and leaving the busy scene of which I would gladly have seen more, I moved off to our quarters.

Our proposed host had returned, and received us almost civilly. He was a dark, saturnine looking man, and evidently not given to hospitality. We nevertheless got a very good supper, none the less acceptable because of our visit to the lake on the top of a horseback ride of sixty miles that day. We had not finished before Señor Jauregui trotted up to the door. He had heard where we were, and had come directly to our quarters. I thought he was better received than we had been, but the difference was not more than between cool and cold. I made a kind of apology for my desertion of the Señor, which was very politely received; but I hope it was more satisfactory to him than it was to me.

During the evening I hired some mozos to go to the Indian Pueblos of Jinotepec and Nindiri, to bring me next morning the oldest Indians who could be found, retaining any knowledge of the language originally spoken here, with the view of procuring a brief vocabulary. The rest of the evening was spent in inquiring about antiquities, and in listening to the family history of the Señora of the mansion, who, besides keeping a *tienda* in one corner of the house, had the honor of being sister of a late minister of the country in Europe, once Secretary of the Treasury, but who just now did not stand in the highest favor with Government or people. How much the fact of this relationship had to do with my reception, it is hardly worth the while to conjecture. The family history was not the most entertaining to weary travellers, and having a keen remembrance of the table at Matcaras, and catching glimpses of inviting curtained beds in the inner rooms, I made no efforts to disguise my *ennui*. Finally, I

plainly suggested that it was bed time. Our host took a miserable candle, but instead of leading to the inviting curtained beds aforesaid, marched us out into the corridor, to a kind of outbuilding at one extremity, with a rickety door, a single little window, unpaved floor, and mildewed walls. Here were two dirty hide beds, upon the headboards of which some chickens were roosting. There was not an article of furniture in the room; not a rag of clothing on the beds. He stuck the candle against the wall, and was about departing, when I called him by name. He turned round, and I looked him full in the face for a moment, and then told him "go!" He really had the decency to blush! Ben made up a kind of bed with the saddles and blankets, and spite of all discomforts I slept soundly and well. I was up early to enjoy the delicious air of the morning, and strolled out into the silent streets, and for half a mile up one of the avenues, to a small picturesque church in a little square, surrounded by a high cactus hedge, and filled with magnificent, ancient palms. The church was a quaint structure, and on a slab sunk in the wall of the façade was an inscription, of which I could only make out the words, "en el año 1684." It had been long abandoned, and a flock of silent zopilòtes were perched on the roof, with wings half expanded to catch the breeze of the morning. The area around it was now used as a cemetery, and kept scrupulously neat and free from weeds.

Upon my return to the house, I found the Commissioner and the breakfast waiting. We had the table all to ourselves in the corridor, and in the intervals of his masticatory exercises, Don Felipe favored me with his private opinion of our host, which coincided wonderfully with my own. He also produced a letter, in a very confidential way, which he begged I would forward to Leon, as it contained a full exposure of the treatment to which we had been subjected; but which, it afterwards turned out, related to certain political movements of doubtful propriety. And as he mounted his horse to

depart, he whispered in my ear, with the air of a man vindicating the national reputation for hospitality, that he had paid the bill for the party. I, of course, could only bow my acknowledgments, and with a "buena viaje," the Commissioner rode off. The next time I saw him, three or four months later, a file of soldiers was marching him through the streets of Leon, a proscribed man, under arrest for treason!

Up to the departure of the Commissioner, I had been in doubt as to my position in the house, whether I was a paying guest or otherwise, and had in consequence put up with many things little agreeable to my feelings. I now felt relieved, and made a number of very imperative if not necessary orders, by way of compensating myself for lost time, and getting the worth of my money. Ben caught the spirit, and instead of attending to our animals himself, went through double the fatigue in making the servants of the house do the drudgery, treating them at the same time to a variety of forcible epithets, besides indulging in some reflections on their maternal ancestry.

Before eight o'clock the Indians whom I had sent for made their appearance, and squatted down in the corridor. Amongst them was a female, a little withered creature, with only a blanket around her middle, who seemed to know more than all the rest, and who was as prompt as an ambitious school-boy in replying to my questions. This annoyed her husband greatly, who, not content with berating her for what he called her impertinence, would have administered practical reproof, had he not been kept in check by our presence. "Ah, señor," he said, "this woman has been so all her life! Heaven help me!" and he lifted his eyes and crossed himself. With great difficulty I filled out my blank vocabulary, and dismissed my swarthy visitors, giving an extra real or two to the woman, who gratefully volunteered to visit Leon, if I required further information.

I had heard of a ravine not far from Masaya, in which

there were inscribed rocks, "piedrads labradas," and my official guide of the preceding evening undertook to lead us to the place. We went down the same broad avenue towards the lake, but before reaching it, turned to the left, and passing through luxuriant fields of yucas and tobacco, along the edge of the precipice, came at last to a hollow, where stood the hydraulic wonder of Masaya, called, *par excellence*, "La Maquina," the machine. It was a very simple and very rude apparatus for elevating water from the lake. The water jars were placed in sacks attached to an endless rope, connected with a pulley below, and revolving on a wheel or drum, turned by horse power above. The cliff here was lower than at any other point, and for half the distance to the water absolutely precipitous. Below, the fallen rocks and the earth washed from the ravine had formed an inclined plane, up which the jars were brought on men's shoulders. The proprietor of the Maquina, who seemed exceedingly proud of his achievement, told me that the machine raised the jars as fast as eight active men could bring them to the foot of the precipice. The water was emptied into a large trough hollowed from a single tree, and here the proprietors of the town watered their animals, at a certain rate per week. The whole affair was an experiment, and he was not yet certain that it would succeed, because of the opposition of the aguadoras, who regarded it as a flagrant innovation on their immemorial privileges. He concluded by inquiring if we had similar contrivances in "El Norte" and seemed very complacent when I assured him that there was nothing of the kind in the whole extent of our country. The Maquina stood at the mouth of the ravine of which we were in search. We entered, and proceeded up its narrow bed, shut in by walls of rock, and completely arched over with trees, for about a quarter of a mile. Here the face of the rock upon the left side was comparatively smooth, and literally covered with figures rudely cut in outline A few were still dis-

tinct, but most were so much obliterated that they could not be made out with any degree of satisfaction. Many were covered with the fallen debris, and the earth which the rains had brought down; and still others were carved so high up on the precipitous rocks, that their character could not be ascertained. They covered the face of the cliffs for more than a hundred yards, and consisted chiefly of rude representations of animals and men, with some ornamented and perhaps arbitrary figures, the significance of which is now unknown. PLATE I. of the "*Sculptured Rocks of Masaya*," exhibits the principal outlines upon the first section to which we came, and PLATE II. those upon the second. Upon the latter there seems to have been an attempt at delineating the sun in two places, and perhaps also to record some event, for it is a plausible supposition that the straight marks on the upper section of Plate II. were intended for numerals. The principal right hand figure of this section seems to have been designed to represent a shield, arrows, or spears, and the *xiuatlatli*, or aboriginal instrument for throwing spears, which are frequently grouped in similar manner in the Mexican paintings. The principal figure in the inferior section is evidently intended to represent a monkey. In respect to the other figures, the reader is at liberty to form his own conjectures. Rocks inscribed in very much the same manner, are scattered all over the continent, from the shores of New-England to Patagonia. Most, if not all of them, are the work of savage tribes, and seem generally designed to commemorate events of greater or less importance. They are however far too rude to be of much archæological value; and have little interest except as illustrating the first steps in a system of pictorial representation which it is supposed subsequently became refined into a hieroglyphical, and finally into an alphabetical system.

There is some reason for believing that this ravine was regarded as a sacred place; a hypothesis which derives a

DIGITIZED BOOKS OF MARAYA PLACE

SCULPTURED ROCKS OF MASAYA PLATE. II.

certain degree of support from the seclusion and gloom of the spot, where the rays of the sun seldom reach, or reach but for a moment when the wind parts the verdure which

VIEW IN THE "QUEBRADA DE LAS INSCRIPCIONES."

shadows over it like a tent. Upon PLATE II., No. 2, will be observed a flight of rude steps cut in the rock, indicated by the letter *a*. These lead to a shelf in the cliff, about three paces broad, at the back of which the rock again abruptly rises to the height of more than a hundred feet. Upon this shelf, and immediately above the figure which I have supposed to represent an ape, is what is called "el Baño," the Bath. It is a rectangular excavation in the rock, nearly eight feet long, four

broad, and eighteen inches deep, cut with great smoothness, the sides sloping regularly to the bottom. A groove about an inch and a half deep, leading to the edge of the cliff, is cut entirely around this basin, with the probable design of preventing the water from running into it. The name given to this excavation throws no light upon its true character, for it would be wholly inadequate for bathing purposes, even if there were a supply of water near, which there is not. There seems to be but one explanation of its origin, which has so much as the merit of plausibility, viz., that it was, in some way, connected with the superstitions of the aborigines, and devoted to sacred objects.

To the left, and a little above the figure which I have supposed to represent the sun, (*c*,) there is a pentagonal hole or shaft, penetrating horizontally into the rock. It is about sixteen or eighteen inches in diameter, and of an indefinite depth. I thrust a pole into it for upwards of twenty feet. The sides are perfectly regular and smooth. Our guide pointed out to me one similar, some distance off, in another part of the ravine. It was, however, not more than five or six inches in diameter, and occurred so high up on the cliff that I could not ascertain its depth. The rock is basaltic or trachytic, and very hard. I am not aware that such openings are

found in this kind of rock; but nevertheless suppose that those under notice are natural. Our guide insisted that they were artificial, and said the Indians have a tradition that they lead to subterranean chambers. I cannot describe them better than by saying that they appeared to be the matrices from which gigantic crystals had been withdrawn.

Besides the figures represented in the plates, there were

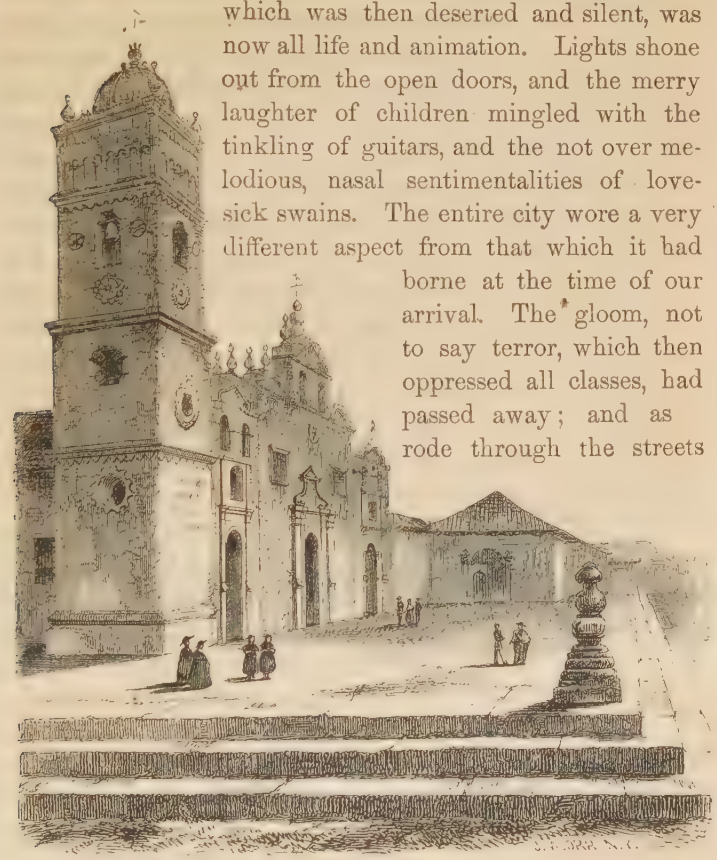
many isolated ones, at various places on the rocks, among which those engraved above were several times repeated. Our guide also told us that there were other rocks, having figures both painted and sculptured upon them, at several points around the lake, but we could not ascertain the precise locality of any except those before us. Near a place called Santa Catrina, I was informed, there is a large rock covered with figures in red paint, like those at Nihapa, representing men and women dancing, and playing upon instruments of music. I had, however, no opportunity of ascertaining how far the account coincided with the facts, but have no doubt that it was somewhat exaggerated. The man at the Maquina also told me about what he called "stone vases," which were to be found below the cliffs, at the edge of the lake, a league distant from where we now were. Upon questioning him as to their character, I ascertained that they were kettle-shaped excavations in rocks lying on the shore. He said they were now used to receive leather for tanning, and were probably originally devoted to a similar purpose.

It was late when we returned to Masaya, but as the moon was in its first quarter, I resolved to ride to Granada that evening. So we despatched a cup of chocolate (for which I paid the lady, with the distinguished connections, a dollar and a half) and mounted our horses just as the sun was sinking behind the volcano of Masaya. I hired a mozo in the plaza to ride ahead and put us in the right path,—a precaution, the necessity of which will appear when I say that foot and mule paths diverge in a thousand directions from every principal town, all so nearly alike that it is impossible for the stranger to tell one from another. We met hundreds of Indians, of both sexes, young and old, coming in from the fields, each bearing a small load of wood, corn, plantains, or other articles of consumption. They were all in excellent humor, and saluted us gayly. By-and-by the night fell, and except an occasional straggler, we had the

path to ourselves. Now we wound along in deep dells and ravines, where it was so dark that we could not see each other, and anon emerged into the narrow open savannahs, of which I have elsewhere spoken, smiling under the soft light of the crescent moon. The paths were so numerous, that, after puzzling myself into a state of profoundest confusion, in attempting to keep the broadest and most frequented, I left the selection entirely to my horse. Where we should bring up was a matter of uncertainty; our only land-mark was the volcano of Momobacho, and while that was kept to the right, I knew we could not be greatly out of our way. Our horses were fresh, the evening was cool, and forest and savannah, light and shade, seemed to float past us like the silent scenery of a dream. That ride was a poetical episode of existence, as perfect in its kind as the morning passage along the shores of Lake Managua, with which it contrasted so strongly. Here all was dim and calm and silent, deep shadows and mellow light; there the great sun ruled in his strength, the leaping waters, the music of wind and wave, the songs of birds, man and beast, all was life and action, and the human soul which swelled to the exuberant harmonies of the one, subsided to the holy cadences of the other. Happy is he who truly sympathizes with Nature, and whose heart beats responsively to her melodies. One hour of such communion with our great and genial Mother! How all the struggles of life, the petty aims and ambitions of men, dwindle before the comprehensive majesty of her teachings!

As we rode on, I tried in vain to recognize the features of the country, and the suspicion that we had missed our way passed into a certainty, when, emerging suddenly from a long reach of gloomy forest, we found ourselves upon the precipitous banks of the "Laguna de Salinas." The declining moon shone slantingly upon that deep Avernian lake, with its cliffs casting the shadow of their frown over more than half its surface. I paused for a moment to look upon the

gloomy picture, and then turned off into the circuitous camino real, which we had now reached, for Granada. A brisk ride of little more than half an hour brought us to the arsenal, which stands like a sentinel on the outmost limits of the city. It no longer bristled with armed men, as it had done when we passed it six months before; and the Jalteva, which was then deserted and silent, was now all life and animation. Lights shone out from the open doors, and the merry laughter of children mingled with the tinkling of guitars, and the not over melodious, nasal sentimentalities of love-sick swains. The entire city wore a very different aspect from that which it had borne at the time of our arrival. The gloom, not to say terror, which then oppressed all classes, had passed away; and as rode through the streets



CHURCH OF SAN FRANCISCO, GRANADA.

and witnessed the apparent absence of want, of care for the present, or concern for the future, I could not resist the im-

pression that probably no equal number of people in the world enjoyed more real happiness than these. With the mass of men, those whose higher powers of enjoyment have never been developed, and whose happiness depends chiefly upon the absence of physical wants, or upon the ease with which they may be gratified, the life of the people of Granada must come very near to their ideal of human existence. And he will be a bold speculator, who having seen man under the various aspects, political or otherwise, in which the world presents him, shall deny the truth of the popular idea; and a bold innovator who, in vain aspirations for what he conceives necessary for the popular welfare, shall disturb this illusion, if illusion it be, which the mass of mankind so fondly cherish.

I had engaged quarters in advance, and rode to them at once. A large sala was ready for our reception, and in less than ten minutes a cup of foaming chocolate was smoking upon the sideboard. Our first visitor was our old friend, Dr. S., who brought with him another American, a bluff sailor from Albany, who, by a singular series of vicissitudes, had found his way to Granada. He had shipped from New York for Rio, thence to Callao, where the crew was paid off, and the vessel sold. The world was all agog for California, and Jack, with his brother tars, also caught the fever. But how to get there was a question. Every vessel was overcrowded, and passages were at a rate far beyond the ability of any of them to pay. In this dilemma eight of their number clubbed together and purchased an open whale-boat, which they victualled and watered to the best of their ability, and, with a daring eminently American, started on a voyage of upwards of four thousand miles. They put in once or twice to procure supplies, and had accomplished one-half of the distance, when they were overtaken by a storm, dismasted, and capsized, and with the loss of two of their number, after drifting for four days, with neither food nor drink,

at the mercy of the winds and currents, were finally driven upon an unknown coast. Here a few wild fruits, some birds, and shell-fish, supplied the immediate wants of nature. Repairing their disabled boat, so far as they were able, without clothing, arms, or utensils of any sort, they coasted painfully along the shore for two days. On the third day they found a few Indians diving for pearls, who, alarmed at their appearance, fled into the forest. One was overtaken, and through the medium of some Spanish, little understood upon one side and still less upon the other, they ascertained that they were in the Bay of Culebra, in the department of Guanacaste, the southern district of Nicaragua. The region along the coast was uninhabited, but after much difficulty they succeeded in reaching the little village of Santa Cruz, in the interior. Here a division of property, consisting of two old silver watches, and twelve dollars in cash, took place, and the party separated, each with four dollars wherewith to clothe himself, and commence the world again. Jack, who was something of a carpenter, tried to mend his fortunes by mending the houses of the people, but soon found that houses good or bad were of little consequence, and so hired himself to a vaquero who was about starting with a drove of mules for the city of Nicaragua. The fare was bad, and the labor incredible, and after three weeks of suffering in the hot sun by day, and in pestilent damps at night, his feet lacerated by sharp stones, his body torn by thorns and inflamed from the bites of insects, with a raging fever which made him delirious for hours together, and caused his hair to drop in handfuls from his head,—in this plight, poor Jack reached Nicaragua. And here, to crown his miseries, his rascally employer not only refused to pay him, but, while he was lying delirious in an outhouse, robbed him of his little store of money. When the fit had passed, he staggered out into the streets and towards the fields, muttering incoherently. The children were frightened by his haggard looks and bloodshot eyes, and fled

as he reeled along. Fortunately, he was seen by one of the citizens, who not only brought him to his own house, but sent at once for Dr. S., then accidentally in the city, who attended the poor fellow with characteristic humanity and unwearied assiduity, day and night, until he had recovered, and then took him to his own house in Granada. He was still weak, but fast regaining his strength, and I listened to his story, told with the bluff heartiness of the sailor, with an interest which the art of the novelist could not heighten. I had the satisfaction, a couple of months later, of securing his passage on board a French vessel bound to that land of promise to which he still looked forward with unwavering hope: and since my return to the United States, I have received a letter from him, modestly announcing that he has amassed six thousand dollars,—the sum which "he was bound to win or die," and as one-third owner and mate of a little brig, was on the eve of starting for the Sandwich Islands on a trading venture!

Such, in this new land, is the course of Fortune. Jack, my good friend, may God speed thee, and may thy success be commensurate with thy honest deservings! I need not wish thee more than that!

CHAPTER XVII.

VISIT TO PENSACOLA—DISCOVERY OF MONUMENTS—SEARCH FOR OTHERS—SUCCESS—DEPARTURE FOR "EL ZAPATERO"—LA CARLOTA—LOS CORALES—ISLA DE LA SANTA ROSA—A NIGHT VOYAGE—ARRIVAL AT ZAPATERO—SEARCH FOR MONUMENTS—FALSE ALARM—DISCOVERY OF STATUES—INDIANS FROM OMETEPEC—A STRONG FORCE—FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS—MAD DANCE—EXTINCT CRATER AND VOLCANIC LAKE—STONE OF SACRIFICE—EL CANON—DESCRIPTION OF MONUMENTS, AND THEIR PROBABLE ORIGIN—LIFE ON THE ISLAND.

Dec. 2, 1849.—This afternoon we prevailed upon Pedro—who, with his six stout sailors, had been drunk for a week, but were now sober and anxious to lay in a new supply of reals for another debauch—to take us over to the little island of Pensacola, almost within cannon-shot of the old castle of Granada. A young fellow, whilom a sailor, but now in the Dr.'s service, on half-pay, as honorary man of all-work, averred that upon this island were "*piedras antiguas*" of great size, but nearly buried in the earth. It seemed strange that in all our inquiries concerning antiquities, of the padres and licenciados, indeed of the "best informed" citizens of Granada, we had not heard of the existence of these monuments. The Dr. was not a little skeptical, but experience had taught me that more information, upon these matters, was to be gathered from the bare-footed *mozos* than from the black-robed priests, and I was obstinate in my determination to visit Pensacola.

It was late when we started, but in less than an hour we leaped ashore upon the island. It is one of the "out-liers" of the labyrinth of small islands which internal fires long

ago thrust up from the depths of the lake, around the base of the volcano of Momobacho; and its shores are lined with immense rocks, black and blistered by the heat which accompanied the ancient disruptions of which they are the evidences. In some places they are piled up in rough and frowning heaps, half shrouded by the luxuriant vines which nature trails over them, as if to disguise her own deformities. In the island of Pensacola these rocks constitute a semi-circular ridge, nearly enclosing a level space of rich soil,—a kind of amphitheatre, looking towards the west, the prospect extending beyond the beach of Granada to the ragged hills and volcanic peaks around the lake of Managua. Upon a little elevation, within this natural temple, stood an abandoned cane hut, almost hidden by a forest of luxuriant plantains, which covered the entire area with a dense shadow, here and there pierced by a ray of sunlight, falling like molten gold through narrow openings in the leafy roof.

No sooner had we landed, than our men dispersed themselves in search of the monuments, and we followed. We were not long kept in suspense; a shout of "*aqui, aqui!*" "here, here," from the Dr.'s man, announced that they were found. We hurried to his side. He was right; we could distinctly make out two great blocks of stone, nearly hidden in the soil. The parts exposed, though frayed by storms, and having clearly suffered from violence, nevertheless bore evidences of having been elaborately sculptured. A demand was made for the machetes of the men; and we were not long in removing enough of the earth to discover that the supposed blocks were large and well-proportioned statues, of superior workmanship and of larger size than any which we had yet encountered. The discovery was an exciting one, and the Indian sailors were scarcely less interested than ourselves. They crouched around the figures, and speculated earnestly concerning their origin. They finally seemed to agree that the larger of the two was no other than "Monte-

zuma." It is a singular fact that the name and fame of the last of the Aztec emperors is cherished by all the Indian remnants from the banks of the Gila to the shores of Lake Nicaragua. Like the Pecos of New Mexico, some of the Indians of Nicaragua still indulge the belief that Montezuma will some day return, and reëstablish his ancient empire.

I was convinced that there were other monuments here, but the sun was going down, and having resolved to return the next day, I gave up the search,—not, however, without engaging Pedro to be ready, with men and tools, to return at sunrise the next morning.

Pedro, for a miracle, was true to his word (probably because he had no money wherewith to get drunk); and the dew was fresh on the leaves, the parrots chattered vociferously, and the waves toyed cheerfully with the black basaltic rocks, as we leaped ashore a second time on Pensacola. The boat was moored, coffee speedily made and despatched, and then Pedro's crew stripped themselves naked, and made other formidable preparations for disinterring the idols. But the preparations were more formidable than the execution. They commenced very well, but long before the figures were exposed to view, they were all smitten with a desire to hunt up others,—a plausible pretext for skulking away and stretching themselves on the ground beneath the plantains. I was at one time left wholly alone; even Pedro had disappeared; but the rascals came tumbling together again when I proclaimed that the "*aguardiente*" was circulating. By dint of alternate persuasions and threats, we finally succeeded in getting the smaller of the two figures completely uncovered. It had evidently been purposely buried, for one of the arms had been broken in its fall into the pit which had been previously dug to receive it, and the face had been bruised and mutilated. In this way the early Catholic zealots had endeavored to destroy the superstitious attachment of the aborigines to their monuments. It was, however, sat-

isfactory to reflect that the figures were probably, on the whole, better preserved by their long interment than if they had been suffered to remain above ground. The next difficulty was to raise the prostrate figure; but after much preparation, propping, lifting, and vociferation, we succeeded in standing it up against the side of the hole which we had dug, in such a position that my artist could proceed with his sketch. It represented a human male figure, of massive proportions, seated upon a square pedestal, its head slightly bent forward, and its hands resting on its thighs, as represented in the accompanying PLATE, No. I. Above the face rose a heavy and monstrous representation of the head of an animal, below which could be traced the folds of a serpent, the fierce head of which was sculptured, open-mouthed and with life-like accuracy, by the side of the face of the figure. The whole combination was elaborate and striking.

The stone from which the figure here described was cut, is a hard sandstone, of a reddish color; but the sculpture is bold, and the limbs, unlike those of the monoliths of Copan, are detached so far as could be done with safety, and are cut with a freedom which I have observed in no other statuary works of the American aborigines.

To enable M. to make a drawing of the monument just disclosed, and to relieve him from the annoyance of our men, I deferred proceeding with the exhumation of the remaining one until he had finished, and therefore summoned all hands to search the island for others, stimulating their activity by the splendid offer of a reward of four reals (equivalent to two days' wages) to any one who should make a discovery. I also joined in the search, but after wandering all over the little island, I came to the conclusion that, if there were others, of which I had little doubt, they had been successfully buried, and were past finding out, or else had been broken up and removed. So I seated myself philosophically upon a rock, and watched an army of black ants, which

IDOLS AT PENSACOLA, PLATE I.

LITH. OF SARONY & MAJOR, N.Y.

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IDOLS AT PENSACOLA, PLATE II.

LITH OF SARONY & MAJOR N.YORK

were defiling past, as if making a tour of the island. They formed a solid column from five to six inches wide, and marched straight on, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left, pertinaciously surmounting every obstacle which interposed. I watched them for more than half an hour, but their number seemed undiminished; thousands upon thousands hurried past, until finally, attracted by curiosity, I rose and followed the line, in order to discover the destination of the procession,—if it were an invasion, a migration, or a simple pleasure excursion. At a short distance, and under the cover of some bushes, the column mounted what appeared to be simply a large, round stone, passed over it, and continued its march.

The stone attracted my attention, and on observing it more closely, I perceived traces of sculpture. I summoned my men, and after a two hours' trial of patience and temper, I succeeded in raising from its bed of centuries another idol of massive proportions, but differing entirely from the others, and possessing an extraordinary and forbidding aspect. (See PLATE II.) The lower half had been broken off, and could not be found; what remained was simply the bust and head. The latter was disproportionately great; the eyes were large, round, and staring; the ears broad and long; and from the widely-distended mouth, the lower jaw of which was forced down by the hands of the figure, projected a tongue which reached to the breast, giving to the whole an unnatural and horrible expression. As it stood in the pit, with its monstrous head rising above the ground, with its fixed stony gaze, it seemed like some gray monster just emerging from the depths of the earth, at the bidding of the wizard-priest of an unholy religion. My men stood back, and more than one crossed himself as he muttered to his neighbor, "*es el diablo!*" "it is the devil!" I readily comprehended the awe with which it might be regarded by the devotees of the ancient religion, when the bloody priest

daubed the lapping tongue with the yet palpitating hearts of his human victims!

It was long past noon before we commenced the task of raising the largest and by far the most interesting idol to an erect position. This was no easy undertaking. The stone, although not more than nine feet high, measured ten feet in circumference, and was of great weight. We were but eleven men all told; Pedro said it was useless to try, we might turn it over, but nothing more. Still I was determined it should be raised, not only for the purpose of observing its effect in that position, but because I was convinced that the under side must exhibit more clearly the finer details of the sculpture than the upper, which had been partially exposed above the ground. I gave each man a prodigious dram of *aguardiente*, which inspired corresponding courage, and after procuring an additional number of stout levers and props, we proceeded to raise the recumbent mass. Our progress was slow and difficult, the sweat rolled in streams down the glossy skins of our sailors, who—thanks to the ardiente—worked with more vigor than I thought them capable of exerting. The aguardiente was worth more than gold to me that day. The men shouted and cheered, and cried, "*arriba con la niña!*" "up with the baby!" But before we got it half raised, a thunder-storm, the approach of which had escaped our notice in the excitement, came upon us, as only a tropical thunder-storm knows how to come. I beat a retreat, dripping with perspiration, into the deserted hut; while the men sat coolly down and took the pelting,—they were used to it! The storm passed in due time, but the ground was saturated, and the feet sank deeply in the soft, sticky mass around the "niña." Still, in order to save another visit in force the next day, I determined not to relinquish the task we had begun. But the difficulties were now augmented, and it was only after the most extraordinary exertions, at imminent danger of crushed limbs, that we

IDOLS AT PENSACOLA, PLATE III.

PITH OF SARONY & MAJOR, N.Y.

succeeded in our object. With bleeding hands, and completely bedaubed with mud, I had at last the satisfaction to lead off in a "*Viva por la niña antigua!*"—"Hurrah for the old baby!" I am not quite sure but I took a drop of the aguardiente myself, while the shower was passing. Pedro and his crew responded by a "*Vivan los Americanos del Norte!*" which, being interpreted, meant that they "wouldn't object to another drink." This was given of course, whereupon Pedro insinuated that "*Los Americanos son diablos!*"—"The Americans are devils;" which remark, however, Pedro meant as a compliment. The figure, when erect, was truly grand. It represented a man with massive limbs, and broad, prominent chest, in a stooping or rather crouching posture, his hands resting on his thighs, just above the knees. (PLATE III.) Above his head rose the monstrous head and jaws of some animal; its fore paws were placed one upon each shoulder, and the hind ones upon the hands of the statue, as if binding them to the thighs. It might be intended, it probably was intended, to represent an alligator or some mythological or fabulous animal. Its back was covered with carved plates, like rough mail. The whole rose from a broad, square pedestal. The carving, as in the other figure, was bold and free. I never have seen a statue which conveyed so forcibly the idea of power and strength; it was a study for a Samson under the gates of Gaza, or an Atlas supporting the world. The face was mutilated and disfigured, but it still seemed to wear an expression of sternness, if not severity, which added greatly to the effect of the whole. The finer details of workmanship around the head had suffered much; and from the more decided marks of violence which the entire statue exhibits, it seems probable that it was an especial object of regard to the aborigines, and of corresponding hate to the early Christian zealots.

The sun came out brightly after the rain, and although wet and weary, and not insensible to the comforts of dry

clothes and the seductions of a hammock, I could hardly tear myself away from these remarkable monuments—overturned perhaps by the hands of Gil Gonzalez himself, at the time when, in the language of the chronicler, "the great cazique Nicaragua consented to be baptized, together with nine thousand of his subjects, and thus the country became converted." "The great idols in his sumptuous temples," continues the historian, "were thrown down, and the cross set up in their stead." The same authority assures us that "Nicaragua was a chief of great good wit, and though the Spanish captain was a discreet man, it puzzled him much to explain to Nicaragua why it was that so few men as the Spaniards coveted so much gold."

M. returned the next day and completed his drawings, while I busied myself in preparing for a voyage to the great uninhabited island of Zapatero.

The T.'s had volunteered one of their *bongos*, one of the largest and most comfortable on the lake; and as most of this kind of unique craft are only gigantic canoes, hollowed from a single trunk of the ceiba, and quite as well fitted, and just as much disposed, to sail upon their sides or bottom up as any other way, it was a gratification to know that "La Carlota" had been built with something of a keel, by a foreign shipwright, and that the prospect of being upset in the first blow was thereby diminished from three chances in four, to one in two. The voyager who has sailed on the restless lake of Nicaragua in gusty weather, with bungling sailors, can well comprehend the satisfaction with which we contemplated "La Carlota," as she rocked gracefully at her moorings, off the old castle on the shore. She was perhaps sixty feet long, and her *chopa* was capable of accommodating four or five persons with lodgings,—something in the pickled mackerel order, it is true, but not uncomfortably, in the moderated views of comfort which the traveller in Central America soon comes to entertain. In front of the *chopa*

were ten benches, for as many oarsmen, and places for setting up the masts, in case the winds should permit of their use. "La Carlota," withal, was painted on the outside, and had a figure head; indeed, take her all in all, she looked a frigate

THE BONGO "LA CARLOTA."

among the numerous strange pit-pans, piraguas, and other anomalous and nameless water-craft around her. Thus far all was well. The next thing was to get a crew together; but this devolved upon the junior Mr. T. After two days of exertion, for there was a great conjunction of *fiestas* at the time, they were enlisted and duly paid,—everybody expects pay in advance in Central America! A fixed number of reals were counted out for the commissary department, and the patron, Juan, solemnly promised to be ready to set sail the next morning at sunrise for the island of *Zapatero*, the "Shoemaker," where Manuel, who was to go along as a guide,

assured us there were many *frailes*, friars, some kneeling, others sitting, and still others standing erect, or reclining as if in death, besides many other wonderful and curious things, among which was a deep salt lake.

The Dr. and myself completed our arrangements over night. After breakfast the next morning, which had been fixed for our departure, I proposed to go down to the lake, supposing that as Juan had promised to be ready by sunrise, we might possibly succeed in getting off by nine or ten o'clock at the furthest. The Dr., however, protested that it was useless to go down so early,—"he was not going to broil in the sun, on the open beach, all the forenoon, not he;" and he comforted us with the assurance that he had lived in the country ten years, and that if we got off before the middle of the afternoon, we might perform any surgical operation we pleased upon either one of his legs! My time was limited, and these vexatious delays almost worried me into a fever. At eleven o'clock, however, I prevailed upon the Dr., much against his will, and amidst his earnest protestations that he "knew the people, and that it was no kind of use," to go down to the shore. There swung our bongo, precisely as we had left it the day before, and not a soul on board! The shore was covered with groups of half-naked women, seated just at the edge of the water, engaged in an operation here called *washing*, which consisted in dipping the articles in the water, and placing them on a rough stone, and beating them violently with a club, to the utter demolition of everything in the shape of buttons! Groups of children were paddling in little pools, or playing in the sand: sailors just arrived were landing their cargoes, carrying the bales on their shoulders through the breakers, and depositing them in creaking carts; here and there a horseman pranced along under the shadow of the trees on the shore; and amongst all, imperturbable buzzards in black, and long-legged cranes in white, walked about with prescriptive freedom! Altogether

it was a singular mixture of civilized and savage life, and one not likely to be forgotten by the observant traveller.

I was, however, in no mood to enjoy the scene,—and the Dr.'s "I told you so!" as he quietly seated himself on a log in the shade, was cruelly provoking. After diligent search, we found two of our crew, with only a cloth wrapped around their loins, lying flat on the sands, their faces covered with their sombreros, and the hot sun beating down upon their naked bodies,—perfect pictures of the intensest laziness. "Where is the patron?" They simply lifted their hats, and reponded, "Quien sabe?" "Who knows?" The eternal "Quien sabe," and uttered without so much as an attempt to rise! This was unendurable; I gave them each an emphatic kick in the ribs with my rough travelling boots, which brought them to their feet in an instant, with a deprecatory exclamation of "*Señor!*" One was despatched to hunt up the others among the pulperias of the town, with emphatic threats of great bodily harm, if the delinquents were not produced within a given time. The second one, a strapping Mestizo, who still rubbed his side with a lugubrious expression of face, was ordered to deposit himself within short range of my formidable-looking "Colt," with an injunction not to move unless ordered. Directly, another recreant was discovered, doing the agreeable to a plump coffee-colored washing-girl,—nothing chary of her charms, as may be inferred from the fact that excepting a cloth, none of the largest, thrown over her lap, she was *au naturel*. He too was ordered to take up his position beside the other prisoner, which he did with a bad grace, but greatly to the pretended satisfaction of the coffee-colored girl, who said that he was "*malo*," bad, and deserved all sorts of ill. "A woman is naturally a coquette, whether in a white skin or black," philosophized the Dr.; "that yellow thing don't mean what she says. I'll wager they have just agreed to get married, or what is the same thing in these countries."

It was high noon long before we got our vagrant crew under our batteries; and conscious of their delinquencies, and not a little in awe of our pistol butts, they really exerted themselves in getting the boat ready. Half a dozen naked fellows plunged into the surf, their black bodies alternately appearing and disappearing in the waves, and towed the "Carlota" close in shore, under the lee of the old castle. The sails, our provisions, blankets, etc., were placed on board, and then we mounted on the shoulders of the strongest, and were duly deposited on the quarter-deck. The bells of the city chimed two o'clock, as we swept outside of the fort into the rough water. It was all the men could do to overcome the swell, and the sweeps bent under their vigorous strokes. Once in deep water, the waves were less violent, but they had the long, majestic roll of the ocean. Here every oarsman pulled off his breeches, his only garment, deposited his sombrero in the bottom of the boat, and lighted a cigar; they were now in full uniform, and pulled sturdily at the oars. Juan, the patron, drew off his breeches also, but, by way of maintaining the dignity of the quarter-deck, or out of respect to his passengers, he kept on his shirt, a flaming red check, and none of the longest, which, as he bestrode the tiller, fluttered famously in the wind.

One hour's hard pulling, and we were among the islands. Here the water was still and glassy, while the waves dashed and chafed with a sullen roar against the iron shores of the outer rank, as if anxious to invade the quiet of the inner recesses,—those narrow, verdure-arched channels, broad, crystal-floored vistas, and cool, shady nooks in which graceful canoes were here and there moored.

Perhaps a more singular group of islets cannot be found in the wide world. As I have before said, they are all of volcanic origin, generally conical in shape, and seldom exceeding three or four acres in area. All are covered with a cloak of verdure, but nature is not always successful in hiding the

black rocks which start out in places, as if in disdain of all concealment, and look frowningly down on the clear water, giving an air of wildness to the otherwise soft and quiet scenery of the islands. Trailing over these rocks, and dropping in festoons from the overhanging trees, their long pliant tendrils floating in the waves, are innumerable vines, with bright and fragrant flowers of red and yellow, mingled with the inverted cone of the "gloria de Nicaragua," with its overpowering odor, with strange and nameless fruits, forming an evergreen roof, so close that even a tropical sun cannot penetrate. Many of these islands have patches of cultivated ground, and on such, generally crowning their summits, relieved by a dense green background of plantains, and surrounded by kingly palms, and the papaya with its golden fruit, are the picturesque cane huts of the inhabitants. Groups of naked, swarthy children in front,—a winding path leading beneath the great trees down to the water's edge,—an arbor-like, miniature harbor, with a canoe lashed to the shore,—a woman naked to the waist, with a purple skirt of true Tyrian dye, for the famous murex is found on the Pacific shores of Nicaragua, her long, black, glossy hair falling over neck and breast, and reaching almost to her knees,—a flock of noisy parrots in a congressional squabble among the trees,—a swarm of parroquets scarcely less noisy,—a pair of vociferating macaws like floating fragments of a rainbow in the air,—inquisitive monkeys hanging among the vines,—active iguanas scrambling up the banks,—long-necked and long-legged cranes in deep soliloquy at the edge of the water, their white bodies standing out in strong relief against a background of rock and verdure,—a canoe glancing rapidly and noiselessly across a vista of water,—all this, with a golden sky above, the purple sides of the volcano of Momobacho overshadowing us, and the distant shores of Chontales molten in the slanting sunlight,—these were some of the elements of the scenery of the islands,—elements constantly shifting, and forming new

and pleasing combinations. Seated upon the roof of the chopa, I forgot in contemplating the changing scenery the annoyances of the morning, and felt almost disposed to ask the pardon of the marineros whom I had treated so unceremoniously.

Our men, for we were now in the cool shadow of the mountain, pulled bravely at the oars, chanting a song which seems to be eminently popular amongst all classes of the people. I could not catch the whole of it, but it commenced:

"Memorias dolorosas
De mi traidor amante,
Huye de mi un instante
Haced lo por piedad."

At the end of each stanza they gave a sharp pull at the sweeps, and shouted "*hoo-pah!*"—a freak which seemed to entertain them highly, although we "couldn't exactly see the point of it." It was nearly sunset when we arrived at Manuel's islands; for though Manuel went with us as a guide, at the rate of three reals per day, he had, nevertheless, a house in town, not to mention a couple of islands, upon one of which was his country-seat, and upon the other his plantain walk and fruitery. His country-seat consisted of a cane hut: but he proudly pointed out to us a heap of new tiles and a pile of poles, and said he meant one day to have a *palacio* on Santa Rosa, for so he called his island. I did not envy him his prospective palace, but Santa Rosa was a gem. Its outer shore, fronting the turbulent water, was lined with immense rocks, within which was a barrier of large trees, draped over with vines, and completely sheltering Manuel's hut from the winds and storms of the lake. Upon the inner side was a little, crescent-shaped harbor, in which our bongo rocked lazily to and fro. A couple of tall cocoa trees, a cluster of sugar-canes, and a few broad-leaved plants at the water's edge, gave a tropical aspect to the islet, which looked to me, in the

subdued half-light of the evening, as a very paradise for a recluse.

Juan proposed to stay here for the night, as the wind was now too violent to permit us to venture outside of the islands; besides, our improvident men had yet to lay in their supply of plantains—the staff of life to the inhabitants of Central America. A little boat was accordingly despatched to a neighboring island, for these indispensable articles, while the remainer of the crew made supper for themselves. A single kettle, their machetes and fingers were their only service, but it was an effective one, and they made themselves as merry as if there was nothing in the wide world left to wish for. For ourselves, a cup of coffee and a cut of cold chicken sufficed.

The moon was nearly at her full, and the transition from day to night was so gradual as hardly to be perceived. Rosy clouds hung long in the west, changing slowly to deep purple and grey; but when the dominion of the moon came on, they lighted up again with a silver radiance. A mass, like a half transparent robe, rolled itself around the summit of the volcano; the verdure of the island looked dense and heavy upon one side, while the other was light, and relieved by glancing trunks and branches. Deep shadows fell on water, with shining strips of silver between, and except the chafing of the lake upon the outer shores, and the prolonged moan of the howling monkey, there was not a sound to disturb the silence. It is true our men talked long, but it was in a low tone, as if they feared to disturb the general quiet. They finally stretched themselves on their benches, and my companions wrapped themselves in their blankets and composed themselves for the night. I did so also, but I could not sleep; it was not the holy calm of the scene the remembrance of dear friends, or those dearer than friends—it was no sentimental revery, no pressure of official cares, that kept me awake that night,—but it was "las pulgas," *the fleas*

from Manuel's Santa Rosa! They seemed to swarm in my clothing. I waited in vain for them to get their fill and be quiet, but they were insatiable, and almost maddened me. I got out upon the pineta, and there, under the virgin moon, carefully removed every article of my apparel, and lashed and beat it angrily over the sides, in the hope of shaking off the vipers. The irritation which they had caused was unendurable, and, overcoming all dread of alligators and fever, I got over the side, and cooled myself in the water. I did not go beneath the chopa again, but wrapped my blankets around me, and coiled myself on the pineta.

I had just fallen into a doze, when I was awakened by the clattering of oars, and found Juan, with his flaming, fluttering shirt, standing over me at the rudder. It was about two o'clock, and as the wind had abated a little, our patron seized upon the opportunity to run down to Zapatero. He had no notion, in which I agreed with him, of attempting the trip with a light boat, in the midst of the fierce northers which prevail at this season of the year. I had been a little nervous about the business from the start, for I had spent one night upon this lake which I am not likely to forget, — and had exacted a promise from the men to load in stones, at the islands, by way of ballast. They made a show of compliance, and next morning I succeeded in finding some twenty-five or thirty small stones deposited near the first mast, weighing in all, perhaps, two hundred pounds!

A short spell at the oars, and we were outside of the island. A broad bay stretched dimly inwards towards the city of Nicaragua; and directly before us, at the distance of twenty miles, rose the high, irregular island of Zapatero; beyond which a stationary mass of silvery clouds showed the position of the majestic volcanic cones of the great island of Ometepec. The wind was still strong and the waves high, and the boat tumbled about with an unsteady motion. Amidst a great deal of confusion the sails were raised—sails

large enough for an Indiaman, for the marineros of Lake Nicaragua consider that everything depends on the size of the canvas. The "Carlota" was schooner-rigged, and no sooner was she brought to the wind, than her sails filled, and she literally bounded forward like a race-horse. She heeled over until her guards touched the water, precipitating the Dr., who insisted on remaining within the chopa, from one side to the other, amidst guns, books, blankets, pistols, bottles, and all the et ceteras of a semi-pleasure excursion. But, as I have said, he was a philosopher, swore a little, rubbed his shins, and braced himself crosswise. I remained outside, and hung tightly to the upper guards. The lull, if it can so be called, under which we had started, was only temporary. Before we had accomplished a tenth of the distance to the island, the wind came on to blow with all its original violence. The waters fairly boiled around us, and hissed and foamed beneath our stern. I cried to Juan, who was struggling at the rudder, to take in sail, for the canvas almost touched the water, and seemed really bursting with the strain, but he responded "too late," and braced himself with his shoulder against the tiller, holding with both hands to the guards. I expected every moment that we would go over,—but on, onward, we seemed actually to fly. The outlines of Zapatero grew every moment more distinct, and little islands before undistinguished came into view. As we neared them, the wind lulled again, and we breathed freer when we dashed under the lee of the little island of Chancha, and threw out our anchor close to the shore. "Holy Mary," said Juan, as he wiped the sweat from his forehead, "the devils are out in the lake to-night!" We had made upwards of twenty miles in less than two hours.

I crept within the chopa, where the Dr. was rubbing his bruises with brandy, and slept until aroused by the loud barking of dogs. The sun was up; we were close to a little patch of cleared land, upon one side of which, half-hidden

among the trees, was a single hut. The owner, his wife, his children, and his dogs, were down on the shores, and all seemed equally curious to know the object of our sudden visit. Juan frightened them with an account of a terrible revolution, how he was flying from the dangers of the main, and advised the islander to keep a sharp look-out for his safety. The Dr., however, delivered the poor man from his rising fears, and ordered Juan to put on his shirt and pull across the channel to Zapatero. An inviting, calm harbor was before us, but we were separated from it by a channel five hundred yards broad, through which the compressed wind forced the waters of the lake with the utmost violence. It seemed as if a great and angry river was rushing with irresistible fury past us. A high, rocky, projecting point of Zapatero in part intercepted the current below us, against which the water dashed with a force like that of the ocean, throwing the spray many feet up its rocky sides. The men hesitated in starting, but finally braced themselves in their seats, and pushed into the stream. The first shock swept us resistlessly before it, but the men pulled with all their force, under a volley of shouts from Juan, who threw up his arms and stamped on his little quarter-deck like a madman. It was his way of giving encouragement. The struggle was long and severe, and we were once so near the rocks that the recoiling spray fell on our heads; but we finally succeeded in reaching the little, sheltered bay of which I have spoken, and, amidst the screams of the thousand waterfowls which we disturbed, glided into a snug little harbor, beneath a spreading tree, the bow of our boat resting on the sandy shore. "Here at last," cried M., and bounded ashore. I seized a pistol and sword, and followed, and leaving the Dr. and the men to prepare coffee and breakfast, started in company with Manuel to see the "*fowls*." Manuel was armed with a double-barrelled gun, for this island has no inhabitants, and is proverbial for the number of its wild animals,

EMBARCADERO, ISLAND OF ZAPATERO

which find a fit home in its lonely fastnesses. I carried a first-class Colt in one hand, and a short, heavy, two-edged Roman sword in the other, as well for defence as for cutting away the limbs, vines, and bushes which impede every step in a tropical forest. Manuel said it was but a few squares to the "*frailes*," but we walked on and on, through patches of forest and over narrow savannahs, covered with coarse, high, and tangled grass, until I got tired. Manuel looked puzzled; he did not seem to recognize the land-marks. When he had been there before, it was in the midst of the dry season, and the withered grass and underbrush, stripped of leaves, afforded no obstruction to the view. Still he kept on, but my enthusiasm, between an empty stomach and a long walk, was fast giving place to violent wrath towards Manuel, when suddenly that worthy dropped his gun, and uttering a scream, leaped high in the air, and turning, dashed past me with the speed of an antelope. I cocked my pistol, and stood on my guard, expecting that nothing less than a tiger would confront me. But I was spared the excitement of an adventure, and nothing making its appearance, I turned to look for Manuel. He was rolling in the grass like one possessed, and rubbing his feet and bare legs with a most rueful expression of face. He had trodden on a bees' nest, and as he had taken off his breeches, to avoid soiling them, before starting, I "improved" the occasion to lecture him on the impropriety of such practices on the part of a Christian, a householder, and the father of a family. I was astonished, I said, that he, a gentleman past the middle age of life, the owner of two islands, should make such a heathen of himself as to go without his breeches. And as I have heard the special interposition of Providence urged on no more important occasions than this, at home, I felt authorized in assuring him that it was clearly a signal mark of Divine displeasure. Manuel appeared to be much edified, and as I was better protected than himself, he prevailed upon me to

recover his gun, whereupon, taking another path, we pushed ahead.

After toiling for a long time, we came suddenly upon the edge of an ancient crater of great depth, at the bottom of which was a lake of yellowish green, or *sulphurous* color, the water of which Manuel assured me was salt. This is probably the fact, but I question much if any human being ever ventured down its rocky and precipitous sides. Manuel now seemed to recognize his position, and turning sharp to the left, we soon came to a broad, level area, covered with immense trees, and with a thick undergrowth of grass and bushes. There were here some large, irregular mounds composed of stones, which I soon discovered were artificial. Around these Manuel said the *huacas* were scattered, and he commenced cutting right and left with his machete. I followed his example, and had not proceeded more than five steps, when I came upon an elaborately sculptured statue, still standing erect. It was about the size of the smaller one discovered at Pensacola, but was less injured, and the face had a mild and benignant aspect. It seemed to smile on me as I tore aside the bushes which covered it, and appeared almost ready to speak. (*See Monuments of Zapatera, No.* 1.) In clearing further, but a few feet distant, I found another fallen figure. From Manuel's shouts I knew that he had discovered others, and I felt assured that many more would reward a systematic investigation—and such I meant to make.

I was now anxious to return to the boat, so as to bring my entire force on the ground; and calling to Manuel, I started. Either Manuel took me a shorter path than we came, or else I was somewhat excited and didn't mind distances; at any rate, we were there before I expected. The sailors listened curiously to our story, and Juan, like Pedro before him, whispered that "*los Americanos son diablos.*" He had lived, man and boy, for more than forty years within sight of the island,

and had many times been blockaded by bad weather in the very harbor where we now were, and yet he had never seen, nor ever so much as heard that there were "*frailes*" there!

During our absence, a weather-bound canoe, with Indians from Ometepec, discovering our boat, had put in beside us. They were loaded with fruit for Granada, and "walked into" our good graces by liberal donations of *papayas*, *marañons*, *oranges*, *pomegranates*, *zapotes*, etc. They were small but well-built men, with more angular features than the Indians of Leon, and betraying a different stock. It will be seen, as we proceed, that they are of Mexican origin. All had their heads closely shaved, with the exception of a narrow fringe of hair around the forehead, extending from one ear to the other—a practice which has become very general among the people. I admired their well-formed limbs, and thought how serviceable half-a-dozen such stout fellows would be amongst the monuments, and incontinently invited them to accompany us, which invitation they accepted, much to my satisfaction.

Leaving a couple of men to watch the boats, I marshalled my forces, and set out for the "*frailes*." We mustered twenty-four strong, a force which I assured myself was sufficient to set up once more the fallen divinities, and possibly to remove some of them. As we went along, we cleared a good path, which, before we left, began to have the appearance of a highway.

While M. commenced drawing the monument which still stood erect, I proceeded with the men to clear away the bushes and set up the others. I knew well that the only way to accomplish anything was to keep up the first excitement, which I did by liberal dispensations of aguardiente—the necessities of the case admitted of no alternative. The first monument which claimed our attention was a well-cut figure, seated crouching on the top of a high, ornamented pedestal. The hands were crossed below the knees, the

head bent forward, and the eyes widely opened, as if gazing upon some object upon the ground before it. A mass of stone rose from between the shoulders, having the appearance of a conical cap when viewed from the front. (*See Plate* 2, *No.* 2.) It was cut with great boldness and freedom, from a block of basalt, and had suffered very little from the lapse of time.

A hole was dug to receive the lower end, ropes were fastened around it, our whole force was disposed to the best advantage, and at a given signal, I had the satisfaction of seeing the figure rise slowly and safely to its original position. No sooner was it secured in place, than our sailors gave a great shout, and forming a double ring around it, commenced an outrageous dance, in the pauses of which they made the old woods ring again with their favorite "*hoo-pah!*" I did not like to have my *ardiente* effervesce in this manner, for I knew the excitement, once cooled, could not be revived; so I broke into the circle, and dragging out Juan by main force, led him to the next monument, which Manuel called "El Cañon," the Cannon.

It was a massive, cylindrical block of stone, about as long and twice as thick as the twin brother of the famous "peacemaker," now in the Brooklyn navy-yard. It was encircled by raised bands, elaborately ornamented; and upon the top was the lower half of a small and neatly cut figure. In the front of the pedestal were two niches, deeply sunk, and regular in form, connected by a groove. They were evidently symbolical. Notwithstanding the excitement of the men, they looked dubiously upon this heavy mass of sculpture; but I opened another bottle of aguardiente, and taking one of the levers myself, told them to lay hold. A hole was dug, as in the former case, but we could only raise the stone by degrees, by means of thick levers. After much labor, by alternate lifting and blocking, we got it at an angle of forty-five degrees, and there it appeared determined to stay. We

IDOLS AT ZAPATERO, Nos 2,3.

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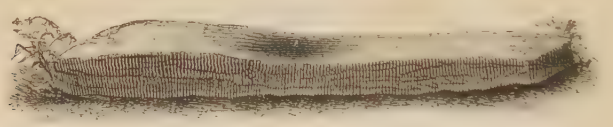
passed ropes around the adjacent trees, and placed *falls* above it, and when all was ready, and every man at his post, I gave the signal for a *coup de main*. The ropes creaked and tightened, every muscle swelled, but the figure did not move. It was a critical moment; the men wavered; I leaped to the ropes, and shouted at the top of my voice, "*Arriba! arriba! viva Centro America!*" The men seemed to catch new spirit; there was another and simultaneous effort,—the mass yielded; "*poco mas, muchachos!*" "a little more, boys!" and up it went, slowly, but up, up, until, tottering dangerously, it settled into its place and was secured. The men were silent for a moment, as if astonished at their own success, and then broke out in another paroxysm of ardiente and excitement. But this time each man danced on his own account, and strove to outdo his neighbor in wild gesticulation. I interfered, but they surrounded me, instead of the figure, and danced more madly than before, amidst "vivas" for North America. But the dance ended with my patience,—luckily not before. By a judicious use of aguardiente, I managed to keep up their spirits, and by four o'clock in the afternoon, we had all the monuments we could find, ten in number, securely raised and ready for the draughtsman. Besides these, we afterwards succeeded in discovering a number of others,—amounting in all to fifteen perfect, or nearly perfect ones, besides some fragments.

The men, exhausted with fatigue, disposed themselves in groups around the statues, or stretched their bodies at length amongst the bushes. Wearied myself, but with the complacency of a father contemplating his children, and without yet venturing to speculate upon our singular discoveries, I seated myself upon a broad, flat stone, artificially hollowed in the centre, and gave rein to fancy. The bushes were cleared away, and I could easily make out the positions of the ruined *teocalli*, and take in the whole plan of the great aboriginal temple. Over all now towered immense trees,

shrouded in long robes of grey moss, which hung in masses from every limb, and swayed solemnly in the wind. I almost fancied them in mourning for the departed glories of the place. In fact, a kind of superstitious feeling, little in consonance with the severity of philosophical investigation, began to creep over me. Upon one side were steep cliffs, against which the waters of the lake chafed with a subdued roar, and upon the other was the deep, extinct crater, with its black sides and sulphurous lake; it was in truth a weird place, not unfittingly chosen by the aboriginal priesthood as the theatre of their strange and gloomy rites. While engaged in these fanciful reveries, I stretched myself, almost unconsciously, upon the stone where I was sitting. My limbs fell into place as if the stone had been made to receive



THE STONE OF SACRIFICE.

them,—my head was thrown back, and my breast raised; a second, and the thought flashed across my mind with startling force—"*the stone of sacrifice!*" I know not whether it was the scene, or the current of my thoughts, perhaps both, but I leaped up with a feeling half of alarm. I observed the stone more closely; it was a rude block altered by art, and had beyond question been used as a stone of sacrifice. I afterwards found two others, clearly designed for the same purpose, but they had been broken.

The relative positions of the mounds or ruined Teocalli, as also of the monuments, are shown in the subjoined Plan. These mounds are made up of loose, unhewn stones, heaped together in apparent confusion. But although they now show no evidences of the fact, yet it is undoubted that they were originally regular in their forms; for we have the

direct assurances of the early chroniclers, that the adoratorios or altars of the aboriginal inhabitants were conical and pyramidal in shape, like those of Mexico, and like them, ascended by steps. It was upon the summits of these that sacrifices

PLAN OF MONUMENTS AT ZAPATERO.

were performed. Their present dilapidation is probably due no less to the hostile zeal of the conquerors who "broke down the altars" of the Indians, than to the destroying assaults of time and the elements. I attempted to penetrate into one of them, (*A*, *in the Plan*,) and removed a great quantity of stones, to the depth of several feet, at imminent risk of being stung by scorpions, but discovered nothing to repay me for my toil. The whole seemed to be a mass of rough stones, largely intermixed with broken pottery, some of the fragments of which were not only of fine material, but showed that the vessels of which they were once parts had been elaborately painted in brilliant colors, still retaining their original freshness and beauty. These mounds do not seem to have been arranged with any regularity in respect to each other; neither do the monuments themselves display any apparent design in their relative positions. It may be

questioned, however, whether the latter have not been removed from the places where they originally stood

No. 1.—This was the first stone which I discovered, and is very faithfully exhibited in the engraving facing page 52. It is remarkable as being one of the two which were found standing. I think it more than probable that it has been placed in that position by the Indians or others who have lately visited the spot. It projects six feet above the ground, in which it is probably planted about two feet. It is a flat slab, thirty-two inches broad by eighteen in thickness. The back is notched, something like that of the figure which I have already described as having been obtained from Monotombita, and planted in the plaza of Leon.

Nos. 2 AND 3.—The first of these I have already described on page 54. Its position is indicated by the corresponding number of the plan, to the right of mound H. Near it was found a smaller and very rude figure, (*No. 3 of Plan*), which is shown lying at the foot of No. 2 in the plate. It represents a man much distorted in figure, with the head bent down upon one side, and resting on the left shoulder, the arms crossed, and the legs flexed together. The design seems to have been suggested by the natural shape of the stone, which is very little modified by art.

Nos. 4 AND 5.—Although not the tallest, No. 4 was the heaviest figure of the group; and, as I have already said (page 55), was raised to an erect position with great difficulty. It is nine feet in height, and eight in circumference at the largest part, cylindrical in form, and encircled by raised, ornamented bands. The singular niches in front I have already alluded to, but have no conception of their design. When found, the preposterous figure on the top was imperfect, but the various fragments were afterwards discovered, and I was able perfectly to restore it, with the exception of a portion of the face. It is represented seated upon a low block, which has a kind of back, like that of a chair. The

IDOLS AT ZAPATERO, Nos 4,5.

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top of the cylinder also shelves in from the circumference. Neither of these features can be exhibited in the engraving. It will be observed that the head forms a cross, a feature which occurs in some of the other monuments at the same place, and which recalls to mind the repeated declaration of the early Catholic priests, that the sign of the cross was of frequent occurrence amongst the sacred symbols of Yucatan and Central America. It is impossible to resist the conviction, that this unique little figure, with its monstrously disproportioned head, was symbolical in its design, and probably ranked high amongst the objects of the ancient worship. More labor seems to have been expended upon its cylindrical pedestal than upon any of the others. The whole is sculptured from a single, solid block of basalt, of great hardness. The niches in front are cut with all the clearness and precision of modern art.

Near the figure just described was found another (*No. 5 of Plan*), which is shown in the same Plate. It is however of an entirely different character; and, as I have elsewhere said, represents a Silenus looking personage, with a large abdomen, reclining in a seat, which has also a high back, as will be seen by reference to the engraving. The features of the face are large, and expressive of great complacency. The head seems to have been crowned in like manner with No. 1, but the conical projection has been broken off and lost. The hands rest upon the thighs; but at the elbows, the arms are detached from the body. The point of view from which the sketch was taken does not permit this feature to be shown. Below the figure, and between the legs and the seat upon which it principally rests, the stone is artificially perforated. The whole is cut with great boldness, and has a striking effect. Our men called it "el Gordo," "the Fat," and it might pass for one of Hogarth's beer drinkers petrified.

Nos. 6 and 7.—This first figure (No. 6) is amongst the most striking of the whole group. It is twelve feet high.

sculptured from a single block, and also represents a figure seated, as before described, upon a high pedestal. In common with No. 4, the stone, behind the head, is cut in the form of a cross. The limbs are heavy, and the face equally characteristic with that of No. 5, but grave and severe.

Near the mound, or ruined teocalli, B, and amongst the *debris* at its base, I found the statue represented in the same Plate with No. 6. It had been broken, and the lower part, including its pedestal, if it ever had one, and part of the legs, could not be found. The face had evidently suffered from intentional violence, and the monstrous head and jaws which surmounted the head of the figure had also been much injured. The carving, in this instance, was comparatively rough, and the figure produced upon me the impression that it was of higher antiquity than the others.

A little to the right of this, on the slope of the mound B, about one-third of the way to its summit, stood another figure, somewhat smaller than the last, and half buried amongst the stones of the mound. It was so firmly fixed, as to induce me to believe that it occupied its original position. Like the one last mentioned, it had suffered much from violence, and, the stone being defective, from exposure. I could only make out that it represented some animal springing upon the head and back of a human figure, very nearly in the same manner as represented in No. 10. I did not think it worth sketching. Its place is shown by the figure 8, in the plan.

No. 9. While cutting a path around the mound indicated by the letter C, which was covered in part by an immense fallen tree, and overgrown with a tangled mass of small trees, vines, and bushes, I came upon a flat slab of stone, resembling a tomb-stone. It had been broken, probably about in the middle, and the upper half, which is represented in the accompanying engraving, alone remained. This fragment is about five feet in length, by three in greatest breadth. The

IDOLS AT ZAPATERO, Nos 6,7.

sculpture, differing from anything else found in the island, is in bas-relief, and represents the upper half of a human figure, with an extraordinary head, which appears to be surmounted by a kind of skull-cap or casque. The face bears

MONUMENTS AT ZAPATERO.—NO. 9.

slight resemblance to humanity; the eyes are represented by two holes deeply sunk in the stone, and the tongue seems to project from the mouth, and to rest upon a kind of flap which hangs upon the breast. It appeared to me that the design was to represent a mask; and the whole probably had a profound symbolical significance. Manuel pronounced this to

be one of the "frailes," and said that there was formerly another, in the attitude of prayer, in the vicinity of this. After much search, we discovered it, beneath the fallen tree of which I have spoken, but it was impossible to reach it. The tree was far too large to be cut away with the rude native axes; I tried to burn it, but without success, and was obliged to leave the figure to be described by some future traveller.

No. 10.—This figure, which is now in the Museum of the Smithsonian Institution at Washington, formerly stood at the base of the mound A. It represents a man, squatted upon his haunches, after the common manner of the Indians to this day, with one hand at his side, and the other placed upon his breast. The head is held erect, and the forehead is encircled by a kind of ornamented fillet. The features are unlike those of any other of the figures found here; indeed, each one had its individual characteristics, which could not be mistaken. Upon the back of this statue, its fore paws resting upon the shoulders, and its hind ones upon the hips, is the representation of some wild animal, grasping in its mouth the back part of the head of the figure. It seems intended to represent a tiger.

No. 11. In the vicinity of the mound D, were several small and comparatively rude figures. No. 11, shown in the accompanying engraving, is sculptured upon the convex side of a slab of stone, about five feet in length by eighteen inches broad. The figure in this instance also is represented seated. The outlines of the limbs are alone indicated. The head, however, is cut in rather high relief. The expression of the face is serious; the forehead is bound by a band or fillet; and is surmounted by a rudely represented head-dress. The hands rest upon the abdomen, and support what appears to be a human head, or the mask of a human face. I brought this figure away, and it is also deposited in the Museum of the Smithsonian Institution.

No. 12.—This is also a very rude figure. It consists of a

rough block of stone, slightly modified by art, and seems designed to represent a human body with the head or mask of an animal. The mouth is widely opened, exhibiting long tusks or teeth. The stone projects some distance above this

IDOLS AT ZAPATERO.—NOS. 11 AND 12.

head, and has upon each side a round, cup-shaped hole, smoothly cut in the stone. The representation of a human head surmounts the whole.

No. 13.—This is a curious little figure, not more than three feet and a half high. The original shape of the stone is retained, and the art expended upon it is but trifling. The engraving on the next page will sufficiently explain its

various features. The position of No. 14 is indicated in the plan, but it is so much defaced that no engraving of it is considered necessary.

MONUMENT AT ZAPATERO.—NO. 13

No. 15.—Amongst the heaps of stone surrounding the mound situated at the extreme left of the group, were found a couple of statues, very elaborately carved. They were extricated with great difficulty, but amply repaid the labor.

The one first uncovered is a colossal representation of what is here called a "tiger," seated upon its haunches. It is very boldly sculptured. The head is thrown forward, the mouth open, and the entire attitude and expression that of great ferocity. Indeed, as it stood erect, beneath the gloomy

IDOLS AT ZAPATERO, Nos 15, 16.

shadows of the great trees which surrounded it, I easily comprehended the awe with which it probably was regarded by the people, in whose religious system it entered as the significant emblem of a power mightier than that of man. The base or pedestal, it will be observed, is ornamented in the usual manner. A considerable portion of it, two feet or more, is buried in the ground. The entire height is eight feet.

No. 16.—This statue was discovered not far from No. 15, and is one of the most remarkable of the entire series. It is upwards of twelve feet in height, and represents a very well-proportioned figure, seated upon a kind of square throne, raised five feet from the ground. Above the head is a monstrous symbolical head, similar to those which surmount the statues in the island of Pensacola. The resemblance to some of the symbolical heads in the ancient Mexican rituals cannot be overlooked; and I am inclined to the opinion that I shall be able to identify all these figures, as I believe I already have some of them, with the divinities of the Aztec Pantheon. The surmounting head is two feet eight inches broad, and is smoothly and sharply worked.

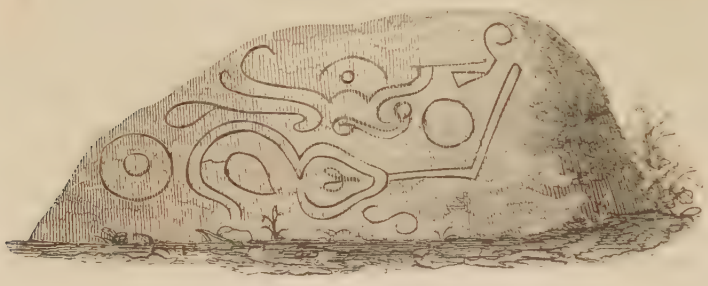
The arms of this figure, as in the case of No. 5, are detached from the body for some distance above and below the elbows The face has suffered from violence, and the statue itself is broken in the middle.

Nos. 17 AND 18 of the plan are oblong stones, modified by art, and were unquestionably the altars whereon human sacrifices were made. There is a hollow place sculptured nearly in the centre of each stone, which it is not unreasonable to suppose was designed to receive the blood of the victims.

No. 19.—This is a basaltic rock deeply imbedded in the earth. The part which projects above the surface is somewhat rounded, and is covered with ornamental figures, sculptured in the stone. Those which could be distinctly traced are given in the accompanying engraving. They are cut with great regularity to the depth of from one-fifth to one-third of

an inch, by about half an inch in breadth. They do not appear to form any intelligible figure.

The shape of this rock favors the suggestion that it was also used as a stone of sacrifice.



MONUMENTS AT ZAPATERO.—NO. 19.

Besides these, I discovered many fragments of other figures, of which, however, I could not make out the design. Some of these fragments were found at the very edge of the extinct crater of which I have spoken, and which, as will be seen by reference to the supplementary plan, is only about one hundred yards distant from this group of ruins. It is not improbable that, in their zeal to destroy every trace of aboriginal idolatry, the early Spaniards threw many of these monuments into the lake. None except those which, from their massiveness, are not easily broken or defaced, were found to be entire. All the others had been entirely broken or very much injured. Not a few have been removed at various times. Those which I have described as still existing in Granada were obtained here; and it is said that some of the most elaborate have been taken by the Indians within a comparatively late period, and either buried or set up in secluded places in the forest. Manuel said that when he was there, about ten years ago, he noticed a number which were not now to be found, and which he was confident had been removed, or were so covered up with grass and bushes as

not to be discovered. I myself am satisfied that other figures exist here, and at other points on the island, which might be found later in the dry season, when the grass and underbrush are withered, and may be destroyed by burning. When I speak of grass and underbrush, it is not to be supposed that I mean anything like what in the United States would be meant by these terms. Around the large mound A, there were few trees, but the whole space was covered with bushes and grass; the stems of the latter were as thick as the little finger, and if extended would measure from ten to fifteen feet in length. When matted together they are like tangled ropes, and are almost impenetrable. The explorer has literally to cut his way inch by inch, if he would advance at all.

The dry season had just commenced at the time of my visit, and the grass was only sufficiently withered to be twice as tough as when perfectly green, without being dry enough to burn. I offered rewards for the discovery of "piedras," but the men preferred to lounge in the shade to clearing away the undergrowth; and although the Dr. and myself worked constantly, we discovered no new ones after the second day of our stay on the island. Manuel was certain that there were one or two small, but very elaborate ones, to the right of the great mound A. I commenced clearing there on the third day, but had not proceeded far, when I was startled by the stroke of a rattlesnake, and the next instant discovered the convolutions of his body amongst the tangled grass. I only saw that he was a monster, as thick as my arm; and as he had the advantage in a fight amongst the grass, I beat a retreat, and resigned the grassy citadel to his snakeship. I was not particulary ambitious to resume my explorations in that direction, and the Indians, who entertain a profound dread of "cascabelas," utterly refused to go near the spot.

There is a part of the island called "Punta Colorada," where the Indians told me there were some remains, and

where, upon excavation, many ancient vases were to be discovered. Some of these, from their accounts, contained the bones and ashes of the dead. This point was on the exposed part of the island; and with the wind from the north, and a rough, rocky coast, it was impossible to reach it by water. As to going over land, the thing was quite out of the question. High volcanic cliffs, walls of lava, and deep fissures and extinct craters intervened.

In respect to the monuments discovered here, it will be observed that, although the style of workmanship is the same throughout, each figure has a marked individuality, such as might pertain to divinities of distinct attributes and different positions in the ancient Pantheon. The material, in every case, is a black basalt, of great hardness, which, with the best of modern tools, can only be cut with difficulty. Like those described by Mr. Stephens, at Copan, these statues do not seem to have been originally placed upon the *Teocallis*, but erected around their bases. They are less in size than those of Copan, and are destitute of the heavy, and apparently incongruous mass of ornaments with which those are loaded. They are plain, simple, and severe; and although not elaborately finished, are cut with considerable freedom and skill. There is no attempt at drapery in any of the figures; they are what the dilettanti call *nudities*, and afford strong corroborative proof of the existence of that primitive worship to which I have elsewhere alluded, as of common acceptance amongst the semi-civilized nations of America.

There are reasons for believing that these monuments were erected by the people who occupied the country, at the time of the Conquest by the Spaniards, in 1522. I am not disposed to assign to them a much higher antiquity. Entertaining this opinion, I reserve what further I have to say concerning them, as also concerning the others which fell under my notice in this country, for the chapters on the Aboriginal Inhabitants of Nicaragua.

CHAPTER XVIII.

RETURN TO GRANADA—A BALL IN HONOR OF "EL MINISTRO"—THE FUNAMBULOS—DEPARTURE FOR RIVAS OR NICARAGUA—HILLS OF SCORIÆ—THE INSANE GIRL AND THE BROWN SAMARITAN—A WAY-SIDE IDOL—MOUNTAIN LAKES AND STRANGE BIRDS—A SUDDEN STORM—TAKE REFUGE AMONG THE "VAQUEROS"—INHOSPITABLE RECEPTION—NIGHT RIDE; DARKNESS AND STORM—FRIENDLY INDIANS—INDIAN PUEBLO OF NANDYME—THE HACIENDA OF JESUS MARIA—AN ASTONISHED MAYORDOMO—HOW TO GET A SUPPER—JICORALES—OCHOMOGO—RIO GIL GONZALES—THE "OBRAJE"—RIVAS AND ITS DEPENDENCIES—SENOR HURTADO—HIS CACAO PLANTATION—THE CITY—EFFECT OF EARTHQUAKES AND OF SHOT—ATTACK OF SOMOZA—ANOTHER AMERICAN—HIS ATTEMPT TO CULTIVATE COTTON ON THE ISLAND OF OMETEPEC—MURDER OF HIS WIFE—FAILURE OF HIS ENTERPRISE—A WORD ABOUT COTTON POLICY—THE ANTIQUITIES OF OMETEPEC—ABORIGINAL BURIAL PLACES—FUNERAL VASES—RELICS OF METAL—GOLDEN IDOLS—A COPPER MASK—ANTIQUE POTTERY—A FROG IN VERD ANTIQUE—SICKNESS OF MY COMPANIONS—THE PUEBLO OF SAN JORGE—SHORE OF THE LAKE—FEATS OF HORSEMANSHIP—LANCE PRACTICE—VISIT POTOSI—ANOTHER REMARKABLE RELIC OF ABORIGINAL SUPERSTITION—THE VALLEY OF BRITA—AN INDIGO ESTATE—CULTIVATION OF INDIGO—VILLAGE OF BRITA—A DECAYING FAMILY, AND A DECAYED ESTATE—AN ANCIENT VASE—OBSERVATIONS ON THE PROPOSED CANAL—RETURN ALONE TO GRANADA—DESPATCHES—A FORCED MARCH TO LEON.

We spent three days on the island, going early to the monuments, and coming late. The weather was delightful; and each night, when we returned to the boat, it was with an increased attachment to the place. We had now a broad, well-marked path from the shore to the ruins, and the idols were becoming familiar acquaintances. The men had given

them names; one they called, "*Jorobado*," "the Humpback;" another, "*Ojos Grandes*," "Big Eyes."

At night, the picturesque groups of swarthy, half-naked men preparing their suppers around fires, beneath the trees, in the twilight gloom, or gathered together in busy conversation in the midst of the boat, after we had anchored off for the night,—the changing effects of the sun and moonlight upon the water, and the striking scenery around us,—the silence and primeval wilderness,—all contributed, apart from the strange monuments buried in the forest, to excite thoughts and leave impressions not likely to be effaced. Our stay passed like a dream, and when we departed, it was with a feeling akin to that which we experience in leaving old acquaintances and friends.

We left on the morning of the fourth day. It was Saturday, and I had promised most faithfully to be in Granada to attend a grand ball which was to be given in my honor on Sunday evening. The wind, which had been blowing a constant gale on the lake, during our stay at the island, had partially subsided, and we succeeded, in consequence, in reaching Los Corales about the middle of the afternoon. Here we stopped at a large island, strikingly picturesque where all were picturesque, covered with lemon, orange, and mamey trees, broad plantain walks, and fields of maize and melons, where one of the sailors averred there were other "piedras antiguas." The owner of the island was away, and the boys and women who were left knew nothing of the idols, except that they had been buried,—where, they could not tell. I asked the mistress if I might carry off some of the fine fruit which loaded down the trees. "*Como no?*" why not? was the answer—a common reply in Central America, which signifies the fullest assent. The marineros did not take the trouble of asking, but helped themselves *ad libitum*, as a matter of course. I inquired of Juan, why he did not ask permission to take the fruit, if he

desired it; he looked at me in surprise, and made no answer. He would as soon have thought of asking for permission to breath the air, or use the water around the island.

We had another gorgeous sunset amongst the Corales,—those fairy islets, the memory of which seems to me like that of a beautiful dream, a vision of the "Isles of the Blest,"—and at nine o'clock ran under the lee of the old castle, and landed again on the beach of Granada. Here we found another American, Dr. Clark of Costa Rica, who, wearied of that little state, had come to Nicaragua in order that he might see more of his countrymen, and relieve the monotony of Central American life. We deposited the spoils which we had brought from the island in the house of Monsieur T., a polite and intelligent but very eccentric Frenchman, who lived in a little house on the shore of the lake, and then hastened to our old quarters in the city. The town was in a great uproar; it was the anniversary festival of some pet saint; all the bells were clattering, and the plaza was spluttering with bombas, of which every boy in town had a supply, to be let off on his individual account. They had also "serpientes," serpents, which, when fired, started off erratically, darting from side to side, amongst people's legs, and in at the doors and windows, carrying confusion everywhere, particularly amongst the women, who retreated screaming in every direction, to the great entertainment of the spectators, and amidst the shouts of the boys and loafers in the streets.

The ball "came off" in the house of Madame B., a French lady, whose grand sala was one of the largest in the city, and therefore selected for the "obsequio." I went at nine o'clock, and was received with a flourish of trumpets, by a file of soldiers stationed at the arched portal. The sala was very tastefully ornamented and lighted. It was already full; and not to be behind the Leoneses in their demonstrations of respect for theUnited States, the assemblage all rose upon my entrance; and the Prefect, who introduced me, would have had

a "viva" or two (*à la Hone* at the Park Theatre, on a certain memorable occasion), had I not besought him "por el amor de Dios" to refrain. The masculine portion of the assemblage was dressed in what was meant to be full European costume, but the styles of coats and cravats ran through every mode of the last ten years. The females made a better appearance, but none of them displayed more style in respect of dress, than "Tobillos Gruesos," and the other female attachés of Señor Serrate's Company of Funambulos, who were all present, including the old lady who swallowed the sword, the girl who had turned somersets, and the "eccentric clown Simon." The elite of Granada had doubtless heard how the fashionables of our cities are accustomed to receive squalling women, pirouetting Cyprians, and hirsute monsters of the masculine gender, remarkable for soiled linen, and redolent of gin, which swarm from Europe like locusts upon our shores, and were also anxious to evince their appreciation of art, in their attentions to "artistes." I flatter myself that the "Jovena Catalina" and "El Ministro" were the bright particular stars of the evening; I did the gravity, and she the dancing.[1]

At eleven o'clock supper was announced in the "comedor," or dining room, which was spread more after the fashion of home than anything I had seen since leaving the United

[1] Since the above was written, I have received the little "Gaceta de Costa Rica," announcing the complete breaking up of Señor Serrate's Company of Funambulos, in consequence of the death of "Tobillos Gruesos," and of the girl who turned somersets. The first died of tetanus, or lockjaw, from a slight wound received by the unlucky turning of a knife used in some of her feats of dexterity; and the *Volteadora*, a martyr to her profession, broke her neck in an attempt to eclipse the "Eccentric Clown Simon." I now feel some compunctions of conscience for my allusions to the Jovena's ankles—they were really not so *very* large—and I mean to make amends, by thinking of her hereafter, not as "Tobillos Gruesos," but as "La hermosissima Jovena Catalina."

States. The champagne, however, seemed most popular, and the applause with which favorite dances were received, after our return to the ball room, it is barely possible had some connection with this circumstance. The enthusiasm was at its height, when "Tobillos Gruesos" and her sister danced "El Bolero," and I availed myself of the opportunity to leave, which I did unobserved. It was three o'clock when the ball broke up, at which time I was tortured out of my slumbers by the fearful wailing of half a dozen violins, played by unsteady hands, and by courtesy called a serenade.

On the afternoon of the day following the ball, in company with Dr. Clark, I set out for the Department Meridional, the capital of which is the city of Rivas or Nicaragua. It will be remembered that this was the seat of Somoza's insurrection. I was desirous of visiting it, not less because it was reported to be one of the richest and most fertile portions of the State, than because here the attention of the world had been for centuries directed, as the most feasible point where the lake could be connected with the Pacific, and the grand project of water communication between the two great oceans realized. Here also was the seat of a Mexican colony, in ancient times, where the great cazique, Niquira, had his court; and upon the island of Ometepec, near by, the lineal descendants of these Indians, and many monuments of their labor and skill, still existed.

We proposed to go but eight leagues that afternoon, to the estate of a propietario, to whose kindness we were commended. When we started the sky was clear and serene, and there was every prospect of a fine evening. We accordingly jogged along at our ease. Our path lay to the right of the Volcano of Momobacho, over fields of volcanic breccia, and amongst the high, conical hills of scoriæ, bare of trees, but covered with grass, which form so striking features in the scenery back of Granada. Around these we found large patches of cleared land, now overgrown with rank weeds,

which were anciently indigo and maize estates, but had been abandoned in consequence of the internal commotions of the country. Beyond these, at about three leagues from Granada, we came to a steep hill, where the narrow road, shut in by high banks, was nothing more than a thick bed of mire, mixed with large, loose stones, amongst which our horses floundered fearfully. Midway to the summit, where the hill forms a kind of shelf, is a copious spring, with a musical Indian name, that has escaped my memory. Here were a number of the people of the Indian pueblo of Diriomo, returning with the proceeds of their marketing from Granada. They were listening with great attention to a white woman, evidently insane, whose slight form, delicate hands, and pale face, half covered with her long, beautiful hair, contrasted strongly with their swarthy lineaments and massive limbs. She addressed us vehemently but unintelligibly, as we approached. I turned inquiringly to one of the Indians; he touched his finger to his forehead and said, "*Pobrecita, es tonta!*"—"poor thing, she's crazy." I asked the man if they would leave her there? "Oh no," he replied, "we must take care of her, pobrecita!" And as we slowly toiled up the hill, I looked back, and saw this rude Indian tenderly leading the poor girl by the hand, as one would lead a child, lifting her carefully over the bad places, and carrying her little bundle on the top of his own heavy load.

Upon one side of the road, just at the summit of the hill, we came upon a figure, something like those which we had discovered at the island of Zapatero. It seemed to have been more delicately carved than any of those, but was now too much injured to enable us to make out its design. It was standing erect, and the bushes around it were all cut away. I afterwards learned that it had been brought to its present position and set up by the Indians of Diriomo, as a boundary mark between their lands and those belonging to another pueblo.

The ground now became undulating; we came frequently where plantain and corn fields, and occasionally snug cane huts, could be discovered at the ends of little vistas, and in shadowy dells. Broad paths also diverged here and there from the main road, to the numerous Indian towns which are situated between the volcano and Masaya. The volcano upon this side is not covered with trees, as towards Granada, and amongst the struggling verdure are broad, black strips of lava, and red ridges of scoriæ and breccia. Upon this side also the walls of the crater have been broken down, and expose a fearfully rugged orifice like an inverted cone, extending more than half way to the base of the mountain. Within this it is said there is now a small lake, and another in a smaller vent, upon one side of the great crater, at the top of the mountain. Around the latter, it is added, there are certain varieties of strange birds, which are not to be found elsewhere in the State,—stories which the naturalist would be more anxious to verify than the antiquarian.

It is a singular fact that, under the lee of this volcano hardly a day in the year passes, except towards the middle of the dry season, without rain. This is due to the condensation of the vapors in the cooler atmosphere at the summit of the volcano, and which the prevailing winds drive over to the south-west. As a consequence, vegetation is very rank here, and the forests are dense and tangled. We got the full benefit of one of these volcanic showers. It came upon us with hardly a moment's warning. At one instant we were riding in the clear sunlight, and the next were enveloped in clouds, and drenched with rain, which soon made the roads so slippery that we could not proceed faster than a walk. We rode on for half an hour, when the rain relaxed, and the clouds lifted a little, but only to reveal the cheerless prospect of a wet and stormy night. The change of temperature in this short interval was also considerable, and I felt chilled and uncomfortable. We held a council, and deter-

mined to take up our quarters at the first house or hut we might reach. We soon discovered the buildings of a cattle estate to the left of the "camino real," and rode up to them. There were two mud houses, and an immense shed, roofed with tiles. Here we found a dozen vaqueros, and we made the usual inquiry, if we could "make their house a posada," and, for the second time in the country, were met with incivility. The women of one of the houses had the calentura, and there was no room in the other. There was the shed, they added: we might go there. I rode up to it and glanced under. The sides were all open, and there were a hundred or two cows and calves beneath, which had trampled the entire floor into a sickening mass of black mire. We felt indignant, and after intimating to the black vagabonds who stood scowling at us, that they were "hombres sin verguenza," men without shame, which in Nicaragua is the most opprobious thing that can be said, we rode off in great wrath. Ben, who distrusted the rascals, had employed the time in recapping his pistols by way of showing them that he should be prepared to meet their attentions, should they take into their heads to favor us with any in the woods. I believe he privately told the spokesman, who seemed surliest of all, that he should delight to have a crack at him.

It now came on to rain again harder than before, and night settled around us, black and cheerless. The ground was so slippery that the horses, even when walking, could hardly keep their feet. None except the Dr. had ever been over the road, and in the darkness he was not certain that we were pursuing the right path. We rode on, nevertheless, gloomily enough, for an hour or two, when we discovered a light at a little distance from the road, in what appeared to be a cleared field. We hastened to it, and found a little collection of Indian huts, in which the inmates hospitably invited us to enter. Their quarters were, however, far from inviting, and as we were now wet through, and it was only

two leagues further to the hacienda where we had proposed to stop, we concluded it was as well to suffer for a "horse as for a colt," and, engaging one of the men to guide us, we pushed on. He took us by the best beaten road, through the large Indian town of Nandyme, of which we could see nothing except long rows of lights shining from the open doorways. We would have stopped with the cura, but he had gone to Leon, and so we kept to our original purpose. Beyond Nandyme the ground was clayey, and our horses seemed every moment on the verge of falling. It was a painful ride, and M., who had a fever coming on, was comically nervous, and finally dismounted and swore he wouldn't ride a foot further. We however got him on his horse once more, and proceeded. We were an hour and a half in going a single league. Finally we saw the light of Jesus Maria's house; our poor horses at once took courage, and carried us to his door at a round pace. A dozen mozos were lounging in the corridor, whom we told to take care of our horses, and then inquired for the proprietor. But he did not reside here now; he had gone off with his family, and the establishment was in the hands of his mayordomo. We requested the men to call this person, but they declined, because he was at his prayers, and not to be disturbed. This was a small consideration with us; we pushed open the door and entered the sala. At one end of the room, suspended above an elevated shelf, was a picture of the Virgin, and on the shelf itself two miserable tallow candles, just enabling the picture to be seen. In front, in the middle of the room, was a long bench, and kneeling at this, with their faces directed to the picture, were the mayordomo and his family. They did not look round when we entered, but continued their devotions, which consisted in the alternate recitation of a prayer in rhyme, uttered in a rapid, monotonous voice. At the end of each prayer all joined in a kind of refrain, or chorus, and dropped a bead on their rosaries. We took off our hats, and stood

still, waiting for the end. Happily the prayers were short; they had already been some time at them, and we had not long to wait. We had anticipated a cordial welcome, and this had kept up our spirits through our uncomfortable ride. But the mayordomo did not seem to be at all delighted; on the contrary, he was positively cool, and his sposa, after eying us askance for a moment, tossed herself out of the room, and slammed the door after her. This conduct determined our course, and resolving to carry things with a high hand, we took unceremonious possession. I ordered Ben to bring in our saddles and place them in the sala, and to spread out the wet saddle-cloths on the best chairs he could find, while we tumbled into the hammocks, and bade the mayordomo authoritatively to bring us some chocolate. His eyes were big with astonishment, and he mechanically gave the corresponding order. The chocolate was brought and put on the table. We took our seats, but the Dr. was belligerent, and bringing his fist down on the "mesa," turned to the mayordomo and ejaculated fiercely, "*pan!* su perro!"—"*bread!* you dog!" Bread came in a twinkling. "Bien! *carne!*"—"Good! *meat!*" and the meat came. I laughed outright; even M., who had been as grave and silent as an owl, could not resist a smile, and Ben was ecstatic.

After supper was over, we began to look out for beds. The Dr. and M. concluded to take the two hammocks, Ben the table, and then the Dr., turning to the mayordomo, told him he wanted the best bed in the house for me. The surly host opened a door leading into a little, dirty room, resembling a dog-kennel, in which was a naked, hide bed, and said I might have that. The Dr., I believe, meditated an assault on the fellow, but I interfered, and took possession of the den. I was wet and tired, and cared little for the elegance of my accommodations. I slept soundly, with the exception of being once roused by the crowing of a game cock, perched on the head-board of my bed. I took him by the legs, cut

the cord by which he was tied, and threw him out of the window. He squalled terribly, and I was strongly tempted to give his neck a twist, but thought better of it.

We were up early in the morning, anxious to get away from this inhospitable place. We made the mayordomo produce his bill in writing, with all the items, disputed half of them, quarrelled with him about a sixpence, and finally went off, assuring him, as we had the vaqueros before, that he was "a man without shame."

Beyond this place the country was generally flat, and covered with calabash trees, overgrown with parasitic plants, which almost concealed the limbs and verdure of the trees themselves. The places thus covered, as I have already said, are called "*jicorales*;" and as the trees are usually scattered pretty widely apart, they afford very good pasturage for cattle. Between the various "jicorales" there were swells of land covered with the ordinary forest trees. At the distance of two leagues from our inhospitable quarters of the night, we came to a singular square structure open at the sides, and covered with a tile roof. This we found had been erected by the "arrieros," or muleteeres, as a convenient lodging place, in their journeys between Nicaragua and Granada. The neighboring "jicoral," for most of the year, afforded grass for their animals; and as for themselves, a cup of tiste sufficed. They had only to swing their hammocks between the posts of the shed, light their cigars, and they were "put up," at a very cheap rate. At ten o'clock we reached the cattle estate of "Ochomogo," situated upon a broad stream of the same name, and the largest which we had seen in Nicaragua. The place was a wild one, and surrounded by a dense forest of large trees. It had once been an indigo estate, and the vats in which the indigo had been separated still remained, on the slope between the house and the stream. We were very kindly received, and breakfast was prepared for us with the greatest promptitude. The

mistress of the house was an old lady of great good nature, who, learning we were from El Norte, asked us many curious questions about our country, and was particularly anxious to know about a "Capitan Esmith" (Smith), an American sea-captain whom she had once seen in San Juan, many year ago, and before its seizure by the English. We told her we did not know the "Capitan," which surprised her greatly, because Captain Smith was a man very enlightened "*muy ilustrado*," and a big fellow besides. Poor old lady, she little imagined the extent of "El Norte," and had no conception of the number of "Capitans Esmith" to be found there. She had two well-dressed and really handsome daughters, who brought us chocolate in the daintiest manner, which quite won our hearts by reason of its contrast to that of the mayordomo near Namdyme. The Dr. having prescribed for a sick daughter-in-law, the mistress at Ochomogo declined any payment for our breakfast,—not wholly on account of the prescription probably, for I have no doubt she meant it when she said, "God forbid that I should take money of the Americans! are they not *paisanos*, countrymen?"

We forded the Rio Ochomogo, but had not proceeded far on our way before it commenced raining again, speedily making the roads so slippery that we could not advance faster that a walk. This was vexatious, but not to be avoided; so we protected ourselves as we best could under our blankets and ponchos, and received the peltings without complaint. Three hours' ride in a forest where the trees were larger than any I had yet seen, brought us to an open space, resembling a back-woods clearing in our own country. Upon a knoll in the midst stood the house belonging to the cattle estate of the family of Chomorro of Granada, some of the younger members of which were there on a visit. They pressed us to stop until the next day, but the house was small and already crowded, and we were loth to incommode

the inmates. Besides, M.'s fever was increasing, and I was anxious to get him to some comfortable place, where he could receive proper attentions, while he was yet able to travel. We had a long and dreary ride, until the middle of the afternoon, relieved only by the incident of Ben killing a boa constrictor with his sword, when we reached another large and fine stream called Gil Gonzalez, after the discoverer of the country. It is, I believe, the only natural feature of Nicaragua which commemorates the name of any of its conquerors. Beyond the Rio Gil Gonzalez, we came to open, cultivated fields, "*huertas*" or gardens, separated by hedge rows, along which were planted papaya trees, now loaded with golden fruit. As we advanced, the evidences of industry and thrift became more and more abundant, and passing for a league through broad and luxuriant fields, we at last came to the Indian pueblo of Obraje, the place where Somoza had received his first check by the troops of the government. It was a large, straggling town, a town of gardens, and, judging from the accounts of the chroniclers, built very much after the plan of the aboriginal towns, before the Conquest. The adobe buildings around the plaza were scarred by shot; but everything looked so peaceful now that I could hardly believe war and bloodshed had ever disturbed its quiet.

The Obraje is one of half a dozen towns, situated within a radius of two leagues around the central city of Rivas or Nicaragua, and which are, to all intents and purposes, parts of it. Within this area, therefore, there is a larger population than in any equal extent of the State. At a distance from the centres of political operations, Rivas and its dependencies have escaped the more obvious evils of the civil commotions to which the country has been subject. Its prosperity has nevertheless been retarded, and its wealth diminished, as the State has declined. Yet, in point of cultivation and general thrift, it still retains its superiority. Of

this we had abundant evidences in our ride of a league, from the Obraje to Rivas. The lands were better cleared and worked, and the houses larger and more comfortable than any we had yet seen. To the right was a range of hills, not rocky, volcanic elevations, but smooth, rolling hills, capable of culture to their summits; and between them and the lake intervened a wide plain, two or three leagues broad, with little swells of ground, upon which the houses of the people were usually built. This plain is wonderfully fertile, and suffering less from drought in the dry season, is probably capable of being made more productive than that of Leon; but its greater moisture and comparative lowness render its climate less salubrious. As we rode along, in admiration of the lavish profusion of nature, we, for the first time since we left the San Juan river, saw the *toucan* and one or two other varieties of new and brilliant birds. They were very tame, and evidently felt at home amongst the cacao groves.

The rain had ceased, and the contrast which this part of our ride bore to that of the morning, exhilarated me to the highest degree, and perhaps caused it to make a deeper impression than it would have done under other circumstances. It was late in the afternoon, when, crossing a little New Englandish stream, the Dr. pointed to a large, fine house, sweetly seated in the edge of a cacao plantation, as that of Señor Hurtado, one of the Senators of the State, and at whose urgent invitation I was now in this part of the Republic. The building was elevated, and a broad corridor ran along its entire front, upon which Señor Hurtado and his family were seated, in luxurious enjoyment of the evening breeze. We were recognized, notwithstanding we were disguised by ponchos and stuccoed with mud, long before we reached the house, and the master came down the road to welcome us. Need I add that we were received with unbounded hospitality, and had every want anticipated, and every wish attended to, during our stay?

Señor Hurtado is one of the largest proprietors in the Department, and, with his wife and family, might easily be taken for Americans. They were now living in what may be called the suburbs of the town; their city residence having been destroyed, together with a large amount of property, by Somoza, during his temporary ascendancy. Their present dwelling had also been visited, and the marks of machetas and bullets were visible on the doors and shutters. It had, however, escaped pillage, in consequence of the popularity of its owner amongst all classes of the people of the Department. Connected with the establishment is a large and exceedingly well-kept cacao plantation. Through the middle runs the small stream I have mentioned, crossed by unique little bridges, and here and there forming miniature lakes. The mazy walks were wide and clean, and so effectually roofed in by the broad tops of the cacao-madre, that one might almost imagine himself within the spacious aisles of some grand natural temple.

The morning following, we were waited upon by Don Fruto Chamorro, Prefect of the Department, and the officers of the garrison. Señor Hurtado gave me a fine horse, to relieve my wearied one, and I accompanied them to the town. I was much disappointed in its appearance. It looked dilapidated, having suffered much from earthquakes, to which it is proverbially subject. The walls of almost every building were split or thrown from the perpendicular from this cause, and the façades of two or three little churches, which we passed, were rent from top to bottom, and seemed just ready ready to tumble down. As we approached the grand plaza or centre of the town, we began to see the results of the recent troubles. The doors and windows of the buildings were full of bullet-holes, and the walls had been literally scarified by shot. There must have been a prodigious amount of random firing, first and last. A number of buildings in the vicinity of the plaza had been burnt, or par-

tially torn down, and amongst them were the ruins of the residence of our host, which had been distinguished for its size and superior elegance. Don Fruto, (who, by the way, had in person captured the robber chieftain,) explained to me how the latter succeeded in gaining control of the place, and gave me a little insight into the mode of fighting practised in Central America. To get possession of the principal plaza, and to hold it, is esteemed the primary object of every assault. The garrison always barricades itself there, leaving the rest of the town unprotected: and in this vicinity the fighting almost invariably takes place. Accordingly, at the outbreak of the insurrection, the little garrison, joined by the principal citizens, fortified themselves in the plaza, and waited for Somoza to come on. Of course he took his time, and when quite ready, with his usual daring, attempted to carry the plaza by a *coup de main*. He could not, however, bring his men to charge the barricades in face of the veterans, whose shot swept the streets like hail. He nevertheless persisted in the attempt, but with uniform bad success. Finally he was compelled to make his advances in the usual manner. He commenced cutting through the houses, upon two sides at the same time, advancing from one to the other as fast as the walls could be broken through. The garrison, detecting the movement, advanced in the same way to meet him, instead of waiting to be overwhelmed by numbers in the plaza. The "sappers and miners," if they can be so called, encountered each other in the interiors of the abandoned houses, and in their courtyards; and at the outset, in the bloody hand-to-hand contests which ensued, the superior discipline of the little garrison prevailed. Somoza, at this critical moment, set fire to the buildings with his own hands, and leaving a portion of his men in the houses, made a simultaneous assault upon all the barricades. The garrison, having so many points to defend, enveloped in flame and smoke, and already much reduced, was overwhelmed by

numbers. In the excitement of the moment, horrible excesses were committed, and neither age nor sex was spared. To these excesses, which shocked and alarmed the whole State, the speedy downfall of Somoza and his faction is, in great part, to be ascribed.

Upon one side of the plaza, which was now fitted up for "*un Juego de los Toros*," or a bull-baiting, were the foundation walls and part of the superstructure of a large stone church. It had been planned on a grand scale, and was commenced and carried to its present elevation many years ago; but a severe earthquake occurring, which cracked and otherwise injured the unfinished walls, its construction was suspended, and has never been resumed. The interior is, I believe, now used as a burial place; and a little, low, but compact building at its side is the parochial church. But even this has suffered from the earthquakes. In 1844 a series of shocks occurred, extending through three days. The people abandoned their dwellings, and lived in the open air. The shocks were so severe, that it was almost impossible to stand erect, or even to stand at all, without clinging to trees or other fixed objects for support. On the isthmus, below Nicaragua, and in the direction of the volcano of Orosi, which on this occasion was unusually active, the earth opened in various places, and many of the more fearful results of these convulsions were witnessed by the affrighted inhabitants.

From the plaza, the view of the volcanoes of Ometepec and Madeira, standing in the lake, is exceedingly fine. The regularity of the cone of the former seems more striking than when it is viewed from the opposite direction. I have no question that it approaches nearer the perfect cone in shape, than any other mountain on the continent, not to say in the world.

Upon returning to Señor Hurtado's, we found Mr. Woeniger, a gentlemen of German descent, but a citizen of the

United States, who had resided for twelve or fourteen years in the country. He was intelligent and communicative, and gave me a great deal of information about this section of the State, but particularly concerning the island of Ometepec, on which he had resided for a number of years. He had early cleared an estate there, and commenced the cultivation of cotton, relying upon Indian labor. Things went on very well for some time, and he had imported machinery for cleansing the cotton and manufacturing it, when the Indians, perhaps excited by envious or evil-minded persons, grew idle and unmanageable. And one day, during his absence, a drunken party of them entered his house, violated and murdered his wife, (daughter of a professor in one of the colleges of Pennsylvania,) and then set fire to the building. Some of the miscreants were taken, identified, and shot. Mr. W., notwithstanding this terrible blow, persevered in his enterprise, but with bad success, and was himself finally attacked by a number of his own laborers. He killed one or two, and escaped, abandoning his property on the island, and purchasing a cacao estate on the main-land, at a little place, in the vicinity of Rivas, called Potosi, where he now resided. He represented a large part of the island as being fertile, and well adapted to the cultivation of cotton, but not more so than almost any other portion of the republic. With a proper organization, and the ability of compelling the natives to comply with their contracts, he believed Nicaragua could compete with any portion of the world in the production of this staple, and supply a better article at less price in the markets of England, than the United States itself. This opinion I found was entertained by many other intelligent foreigners, resident in the country, and fully acquainted with the subject. It is this fact, amongst other things, and in connection with the unsuccessful efforts of England to grow cotton in her colonies, in Jamaica, the Antilles, in Guiana, and India, that gives especial significance to

English pretensions on the Mosquito shore, *which is probably the finest cotton growing country of the world.* It is a fact also, which should not be lost sight of by the Southern States of our Confederacy, when we shall be called upon to take a national stand, on the questions which have been raised by the unscrupulous policy of Great Britain in Central and South America.

Mr. Woeniger gave me some information concerning the monuments of aboriginal art found on the island. In the parts best known there had formerly been many idols resembling those found at Zapatero, but they had either been broken up or buried. A group was said to exist at a secluded

BURIAL VASES FROM OMETEPEC.

place, near the foot of the volcano of Madeira, but he had never seen them. The ancient cemeteries are the most remarkable remains of the aborigines. They generally occur upon some dry, elevated place, and are distinguished by an enclosure of flat, rough stones, set in the ground, and projecting a few inches above the surface. Within the areas thus indicated are found, upon examination, many vases containing the bones and ashes of the dead, and a great variety of ornaments of stone and metal. Little gold idols, well worked, articles of copper, and terra cotta figures, are also sometimes found. The vases containing the human bones and ashes are always of one shape, as repre-

sented in the foregoing cuts. It will be seen at once, that the model is that of the human skull. In some of those in which the unburned bones were placed, after the removal of the flesh, (a common practice among the American Indians,) the skull closed the orifice or mouth. Other articles of pottery, some in the form of animals and of fruits and shells, are also found buried both in the cemetries and elsewhere. These are sometimes elaborately painted, with brilliant and enduring colors. A couple of them are represented

VASES FROM OMETEPEC.

in the accompanying engraving. Amongst the articles of metal obtained on the island, and presented to me by Mr. Woeniger, is a copper head or mask of a tiger, which is not unartistic, and displays no insignificant degree of spirit.

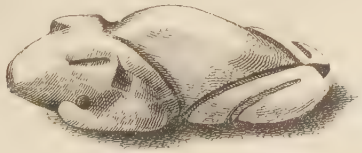
The golden idols, are no doubt identical with those which the chronicler describes as "about a span long," and of which the great Cazique Niquira gave Gil Gonzales, upon his solicitation, not less than "one thousand." One had been found just previous to our arrival, which weighed twenty-four ounces, and which had been purchased by a merchant for an equal number of doubloons, and sent as a remittance to Jamaica. I left a standing order with Señor Hurtado to secure the next one which should be found for me, at any cost. But up to this time, I cannot learn that any additional ones have been discovered. Amongst the other curious

relics which I obtained there, was a little figure of a frog, carved in a grey stone, resembling *verd antique*. It is presented of full size in the subjoined engraving. The holes near the fore feet were doubtless designed to receive the string,

COPPER MASK FROM OMETEPEC.

by which it was probably suspended as an amulet from the neck of its ancient owner. This was found in the Department of Guanacaste, near the Gulf of Nicoya.

I had intended to visit Ometepec; and as, upon our arri-



FROG IN VERD ANTIQUE.

val, there seemed to be a prospect that M., after a little repose, would be able to go with us, Señor Hurtado had ordered one of his boats, with a full complement of men, to be in readiness, on the second morning, to take us over.

The Prefect had also sent orders to the subordinate officers on the island to render us every service in their power. But in the meantime M. had become much worse, and during the night was almost delirious with fever, requiring the constant attendance of the doctor. I. was consequently obliged to relinquish my visit; but, nevertheless, rode down to the lake with the Prefect and a party of the citizens. The distance is upwards of a league to San Jorge, which stands a little back from the lake, upon a dry, sandy swell of ground. It is finely situated, and the country intervening between the two towns is of surpassing beauty and fertility, and covered with cacao plantations, and "huertas," of the most luxuriant productiveness. It was at San Jorge that the final conflict with Somoza took place, and the buildings around the plaza bore the usual marks of shot; and it was here that the French officer who had been so polite to us at San Carlos, but who had foolishly joined Somoza for the sake of "beauty and booty," was killed. One of the officers pointed out a little depression in the surface of the ground; it was his grave; they had buried him where he fell.

A few minutes' ride from San Jorge, along one of the numerous paths worn by the aguadoras, brought us to the lake. The shore is high and bluff, and there is only a narrow strip of sandy beach between it and the waters. Here were numerous bongos and canoes drawn up on the sand, parties of marineros cooking their breakfasts, men watering their horses in the surf, half naked women, surrounded by troops of children, busily engaged in washing, water-carriers filling and balancing their jars—all the movement and picturesque life which had so deeply impressed me upon my first landing on the beach of Granada. The wind blew strongly, and the waves swept in with a force which surprised me. The rollers outside were like those of the ocean, and a canoe just then coming in was swamped the moment it reached them, and was only prevented from being

overset and stove on the shore, by the crew, who had previously thrown themselves overboard, and steadied it by clinging to its sides. It would have been impossible for us to have got outside, even if we had been in readiness to go to the island. I found that our patron and crew were to have been the same who had taken us to Pensacola, and had vexed us so prodigiously by their laziness. They saluted me with the greatest familiarity, and seemed to be much disappointed when Señor Hurtado told them they would not be wanted. They had evidently counted on a large supply of aguardiente, and on being gloriously drunk for at least a week. I gave them a few reals wherewith to drink my health, for which they invoked the blessing of all the saints on my head.

The return ride was a rapid one, and the young officers who accompanied us amused themselves greatly by racing their horses. Their mode of doing this is very different from ours, and a trifle more dangerous. The rivals place themselves side by side, and join hands, starting off at a given signal. The one whose greater speed enables him to drag the other from his horse, wins; and if the race is in earnest, the least the beaten party can expect to get off with is a tumble in the sand, with a chance of a broken head. There are many fine horsemen in Central America; indeed, a good horse, and the ability to ride him well, are the two things which the "fast fellows" of that country most do covet, and in the possession and display of which they take most pride. For my sole gratification, I presume, one of the officers volunteered some exhibitions of his skill. He requested me to drop my whip a little in advance; I did so, and as he dashed past, at the full speed of his horse, he bent down gracefully and picked it up,—a feat which those who do not think difficult had better attempt. He also borrowed a lance from an Indian whom we met, and showed me the manner in which it is handled by those who fully understood its use.

I was amazed at his dexterity, and not less so at the skill with which one of his companions, using only his sword, warded off the blows aimed at him with the blunt end. It occurred to me that any "gringo" like myself might be a dozen times run through by a lancer of this order, before fairly aware of the circumstance; and I made a mental resolve, in case of encountering "ladrones" with lances, to appeal to my "Colt," before admitting any too familiar approaches.

The morning of the third day found M. no better, and requiring, as before, the constant care of the doctor. Señor Hurtado had, however, planned an excursion across the country to the Pacific. We were to take coffee at Potosi with Mr. Woeniger, breakfast at an estate of Señor Hurtado's, in the little valley of Brito, ride to the sea, and be back to dinner. We were off at daylight, and rode a league through an unbroken garden, to Potosi, a straggling town like the Obraje, and, like that, a curious compound of city and country, plazas and plantations. Our friend was expecting us, and after despatching our coffee, none the less acceptable because of our brisk ride, he showed us through his cacao estate. It was small but well kept, and constantly increasing in value; for in addition to replacing the decaying trees, he every year put in an additional four or five hundred, each one of which, when matured, according to the rate of calculation here, is valued at a dollar. It requires from five to seven years to make a plantation: or rather, that time is requisite before the trees commence "paying."

Amongst the various aboriginal relics which Mr. Woeniger had collected, on the island of Ometepec, was one of considerable interest, which is represented in No. 2 of the accompanying Plate. It is of stone, about fourteen inches in length, and eight high, and seems intended to be a representation of some animal, *couchant*. It was carefully preserved by the Indians at the summit of a high, secluded

ABORIGINAL RELICS.

LITH. OF SARONY & MAJOR, N.YORK

point of rocks, where they secretly resorted to pour out libations before it, and to perform rites, the nature of which none would ever reveal. For more than fifty years the padres sought to discover this idol, but without success. Recently, however, its place had been ascertained; it was seized and would have been thrown into the lake, had not Mr. Woeniger promised, if placed in his hands, to remove it from the island for ever. It is now in the Museum of the Smithsonian Institution at Washington.

At a little distance beyond Potosi, the ridge of land which intervenes between the lake and the Pacific, commences to rise. It can hardly be called a ridge; it is a broad plateau, and what upon either side appear to be hills, are nothing more than the *edges* of the table-land. The top of this plateau is undulating and diversified, and resembles some of the finer parts of New York and New England. We had a number of magnificent views of the lake and the intervening plain, as we rose above the general level; the volcanoes of Ometepec and Madeira, now as always, constituting the most striking features in the landscape. Our road was gravelly and dry, and its windings pleasantly relieved by open fields and shadowy woodlands. I was a little surprised to find the valley of Brito, upon the summit of the plateau of which I have spoken, along which it runs longitudinally, and finally, by a succession of "saltos," falls into the Pacific, at the little harbor of Nacascolo or Brito, not far to the northward of that of San Juan del Sur, the point spoken of as the western terminus of the proposed line of transit. It is a sweet little valley, and at one of its sweetest parts is the indigo estate of Señor Hurtado. The building was spacious, built of adobes, with a tiled roof, and surrounded by a high fence of posts, placed in the ground upright, like stockades. Within this the ground was beaten smooth, and, spread upon sheets, were large quantities of indigo, receiving a final drying in the sun, preparatory to being packed for market. Our host, with

hospitable prevision, had, the day before, sent word of our coming, and we found a capital breakfast, and a couple of well-cooled bottles of claret, awaiting our attentions. This disposed of, we went to visit the indigo "maquina." The first point of interest was the dam across the stream from which the water is obtained for driving the machinery and supplying the works. It was well constructed, and a very creditable piece of workmanship for any country. The next thing in importance was the "maquina" itself. It consisted of two immense vats of masonry, situated one above the other. In the lower one a large wheel was so placed as to be turned by water. Near these was a drying house, and other requisite apparatus, the purposes of which will be explained in the following account of the process of manufacturing indigo.

I have elsewhere said that the indigo of Central America, amongst which that of Nicaragua is regarded as of a very superior quality, is obtained from an indigenous triennial plant, (*Indigofera disperma*, *Linn.*), which attains its highest perfection in the richest soils. It will grow, however, upon almost any soil, and is very little affected by drought, or by superabundant rains. In planting it, the ground is perfectly cleared, usually burnt over, and divided with an implement resembling a hoe into little trenches, two or three inches in depth, and twelve or fourteen apart, at the bottom of which the seeds are strewn by hand, and lightly covered with earth. A bushel of seed answers for four or five acres of land. In Nicaragua it is usually planted towards the close of the dry season in April or May, and attains its perfection, for the purpose of manufacture, in from two and a half to three months. During this time it requires to be carefully weeded, to prevent any mixture of herbs, which would injure the quality of the indigo. When green, the plant closely resembles what in the United States is familiarly known as "sweet clover," or the young and tender sprouts of the locust tree.

When it becomes covered with a kind of greenish farina, it is in a fit state to be cut. This is done with knives, at a little distance above the root, so as to leave some of the branches, called in the West Indies "ratoons," for a second growth, which is also in readiness to be cut, in from six to eight weeks after. The crop of the first year is usually small, that of the second is esteemed the best, although that of the third is hardly inferior. It is said that some fields have been gathered for ten consecutive years without being resown, the fallen seed obviating the necessity of new plantings.

After the plant is cut, it is bound in little bundles, carried to the vat, and placed in layers in the upper or larger one, called the "steeper," (*mojadora*). This vat holds from one thousand to ten thousand gallons, according to the requirements of the estate. Boards loaded with weights are then placed upon the plants, and enough water let on to cover the whole, which is now left to steep or ferment. The rapidity of this process depends much upon the state of the weather and the condition of the plant. Sometimes it is accomplished in six or eight hours, but generally from fifteen to twenty. The proper length of time is determined by the color of the saturated water; but the great secret is to check the fermentation at the proper point, for upon this, in a great degree, depends the quality of the product. Without disturbing the plant, the water is now drawn off, by cocks, into the lower vat or "beater," (*golpeadoro,*) where it is strongly and incessantly beaten, in the smaller estates with paddles by hand, in the larger by wheels turned by horse or water-power. This is continued until it changes from the green color, which it at first displays, to a blue, and until the coloring matter, or *floculæ,* shows a disposition to curdle or subside. This is sometimes hastened by the infusion of certain herbs. It is then allowed to settle, and the water is carefully drawn off. The pulp granulates, at which time it resembles a fine, soft clay; after which it is put into bags to drain, and then

spread on cloths, in the sun, to dry. When properly dried, it is carefully selected according to its quality, and packed in hide cases, 150 lbs. each, called *ceroons*. The quality has not less than nine gradations, the best being of the highest figure. From 6 to 9 are called *flores*, and are the best; from 3 to 6, *cortes;* from 1 to 3, inclusive, *cobres*. The two poorer qualities do not pay expenses. A *manzana* of one hundred yards square, produces, on an average, about one ceroon at each cutting. After the plant has passed through the vat, it is required by law that it shall be dried and burnt; because, in decomposing, it generates, by the million, an annoying insect called the "indigo fly."

Thus the indigo plant requires constant attention during its growth, and must be cut at a particular period, or it is valueless. The subsequent processes are delicate, and require the utmost care. It will readily be understood, therefore, that the production of this staple would suffer most from revolutions and disturbances of the country, when it is impossible to obtain labor, or where the laborers are liable at any moment to be impressed for the army. As a consequence, it has greatly declined; many fine estates have been entirely abandoned, and the export of the article reduced to less than a fifth of what it once was. Its production is now chiefly confined to San Salvador, where industry is better organized than in any of the other States.

From Señor Hurtado's hacienda, we rode along the shaded banks of the stream, to the little Indian town of Brita. It has nothing to distinguish it except its picturesque situation, and its unique little church, painted after the Indian fashion, with all the colors of the rainbow,—here a row of urns, there a line of flowers, curiously festooned, and the whole altogether more resembling the flaming front of a wooden clock from Yankeeland, than anything else under heaven. Near this place was a decayed cacao estate, belonging to a family of some notability in the country, but now only rep-

resented in the female line. The avenue leading to the mansion had once been grand; it was still lined with magnificent trees. The house was now dilapidated, and honey bees had dug out immense establishments in the adobe walls, around which they swarmed in a cloud. A dozen stout, half-naked fellows were lounging on the corridor, surrounded by an equal number of mangy dogs, which showed their teeth and snarled around our legs. The wife of the mayordomo, himself a swarthy mestizo, was a fair, delicate girl, who looked wonderfully out of place amongst her rough companions. I obtained from her—for she was as kind and gentle as the masculines were morose and ugly—the stone vase, No. 1, of the Plate facing page 92. It had been brought to light but a short time before, in digging the posts for a cattle shed. It is about eighteen inches in height, and of proportionate diameter, cut from a single block of granite rock. There were handles, in the shape of a human head, upon each side, and the intermediate space, on a raised band around the middle, was tastefully ornamented, as shown in the engraving.

Reserving for another place the observations which I this day made, in respect to the proposed route for a ship-canal to connect the lake and ocean at this point, I have only to add that the day was delightfully spent, and that our return to Rivas, in the cool of the evening, was one of the pleasantest rides that I enjoyed in the country. I found that during my absence, the Prefect had sent me a very singular relic of antiquity, which had been exhumed some time previously, near the city, which is represented by Fig. 3, in the same Plate with the vase just described. It is of the same material with the vase, and is ornamented in similar style, but more elaborately. It will be observed that one of the projecting arms or ornaments on the side represented in the sketch, is broken off; it probably was analogous to that shown in the front. I cannot imagine what was the purpose

of this singular piece of sculpture, unless designed as a pedestal for an idol, or a seat for the dignitaries of aboriginal times, for both of which purposes it is very well adapted. It is about twenty inches in height; and, in company with the vase, is deposited in the Museum of the Smithsonian Institution at Washington.

M., I found, was getting better of his fever; the dangerous stage was passed, but he would be unable to endure any violent exercise for a week. I could not, therefore, depend upon him to accomplish the primary objects I had in view in visiting this section of the State, and as I expected important despatches from Government at Granada, I resolved, notwithstanding the solicitations of my host, to leave M. in care of the doctor, and return. The next morning was fixed for my departure. At sunrise, Señor Hurtado had everything prepared, including a man to act as guide, and persisted in accompanying me to the Obraje, where, after extending an earnest invitation to visit him again, he left me and returned.

We had been nearly the whole of one day in riding the ten leagues from the Ochomogo to Rivas, but I now went over the same ground before breakfasting. The hostess at Ochomogo was still puzzling her head how it could be possible that I did not know "Capitan Esmith, un hombre muy ilustrado, *y gordo!*" "Captain Smith, a very enlightened man, *and fat!*"

Passing Ochomogo, my guide took me by a new, and as he said, shorter path, from that by which we came; so I missed the satisfaction of calling the inhospitable mayordomo a shameless fellow, and lost the opportunity of seeing Nandyme by daylight. Although the distance is called sixty miles, the sun was yet high in the west when I arrived within sight of Granada. A light shower was just sweeping over it, spanned by a beautiful rainbow, like the portal of Paradise. As I came nearer, I heard the eternal banging of bombas, and rode into the city amidst serpientes, waving

flags, and the other eye and ear-wearying nonsense of a fiesta. I would have gone through the principal street, but the people all at once fell on their knees, and I was saluted by a hundred voices, "Quita su sombrero!"—"Take off your hat!" I looked down the street, and saw a procession approaching at the other end, preceded by a score of squeaking violins and a squad of soldiers, and followed by a regiment of saints' effigies, borne on men's shoulders. My guide dismounted and dropped on his marrow bones in the mud, while Ben and myself turned down a side street, leaving the guide to follow when he got ready. I was heartily tired of fiestas and saints, and began to think if the people prayed less and worked more, they would be doing both God and man better service.

My despatches had arrived that afternoon, with three months' later dates, for we had heard nothing from home during that period, except through British agents, who took a malicious satisfaction in showing us how much more efficient, active, and intelligent is the British Government, in the conduct of its foreign relations, than our own. It was seldom that despatches ever reached the American officers in this country, and then only long after date. I got bushels of letters, papers, and documents, all directed to my predecessor, at eight, twelve, and even eighteen months after they were despatched from Washington. The English agents were never thirty days behindhand. The first intimation of the declaration of war with Mexico, received by our naval commander in the Pacific, was through the British Admiral, and after that officer had taken such measures as he thought proper under the circumstances.[1] It was only the superior swift-

[1] "During the diplomatic employments with which I have been so long honored by the favor of my country, I have been constantly mortified by the dependence in which our foreign agents are left upon a foreign and rival government, for the transmission of their correspondence."—Hon. Henry Wheaton, *to the Department of State, Dec.* 1845.

ness of American ships which enabled us to anticipate the seizure of California by Great Britain, under pretext of securing its Mexican debts. On such a small matter as *that*, turned the great question of American predominance in the Pacific, and American maritime and commercial ascendancy throughout the world. In appointing even so insignificant an officer as a despatch agent, our government should not forget this fact, nor neglect to ask itself the question, "What if England had got California?"

The matters contained in my letters required my immediate presence in Leon. Accordingly I left the next morning, and accomplished the entire distance, one hundred and twenty miles, in a day and a half,—or, counting from Nicaragua, one hundred and eighty miles in two days and a half, being at the rate of seventy-two miles a day. This was done with the same horse, one which had cost me but thirty dollars, and which came into Leon at the same pace with which he had left Nicaragua, and apparently as unwearied as then. And yet I suffered nothing from fatigue, and, notwithstanding all that I had heard said about the debilitating effects of the climate, felt as vigorous as I had ever done, under the most favorable circumstances, at home.

I found two soldiers pacing the corridor of my house, which greatly puzzled me. My old friend Padre Cartine, I afterwards found, had dreamed a dream, to the purport that robbers were seeking to enter it, and had given the General no peace until he had stationed a guard there to keep "watch and ward" day and night. Poor old Padre! It is precious little the "ladrones" would have got, had the dream proved true.

And thus terminated my second antiquarian expedition. I have only given an outline of the incidents which befel me, and shall reserve all speculation upon my discoveries for another place, viz., the chapter on the Aboriginal Inhabitants of Nicaragua, to which those who read for some other purpose than mere amusement, are respectfully referred.

CHAPTER XIX.

VOLCANOES OF CENTRAL AMERICA; THEIR NUMBER—VOLCANO OF JORULLO—ISALCO—THE VOLCANIC CHAIN OF THE MARABIOS—INFERNALES—"LA BAILA DE LOS DEMONIOS"—VOLCANIC OUTBURST ON THE PLAIN OF LEON—VISIT TO THE NEW VOLCANO, AND NARROW ESCAPE—BAPTIZING A VOLCANO—ERUPTION OF COSEGUINA—CELEBRATION OF ITS ANNIVERSARY—SYNCHRONOUS EARTHQUAKES—LATE EARTHQUAKES IN CENTRAL AMERICA—VOLCANO OF TELICA—EL VOLCAN VIEJO—SUBTERRANEAN LAVA BEDS—ACTIVITY OF THE VOLCANOES OF THE MARABIOS IN THE 16th CENTURY—THE PHENOMENA OF EARTHQUAKES—EARTHQUAKE OF OCT. 27, 1849—VOLCANIC FEATURES OF THE COUNTRY—EXTINCT CRATERS—VOLCANIC LAKES—THE VOLCANO OF NINDIRI OR MASAYA—DESCENT INTO IT BY THE FRAY BLAS DE CASTILLO—EXTRAORDINARY DESCRIPTION.

No equal extent of the American continent, perhaps of the globe, possesses so many volcanoes, active and extinct, or exhibits so many traces of volcanic action, as Central America; that is to say, the region embraced between the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and that of Panama, or Darien. In the words of Mr. Stephens, the entire Pacific coast of this remarkable country "bristles with volcanic cones," which form a conspicuous feature in every landscape, rising above the plains and undulating hills, and often from the edges of the great lakes, with the regularity and symmetry of the pyramids. It is a matter of surprise and regret that, affording as it does, so excellent a field for studying the grand and interesting phenomena connected with volcanoes and earthquakes, this country has not more particularly attracted the attention of scientific men, and especially of those who ascribe to

igneous and volcanic agency so important a part in the physical changes which our planet has undergone. Humboldt did not pass through Central America, although fully impressed with the importance of its geological and topographical investigation; a deficiency which he deplores in many places in his published researches. Nor am I aware that any but very partial and imperfect accounts have been given to the world of the volcanoes of this country, and those have been by persons claiming no consideration as scientific men. Recognizing fully my own deficiency in this respect, I should not think of venturing on the subject, except in the hope of directing anew the attention of competent persons to it, and thus contributing to supply the desideratum.

The volcanoes of Central America are all situated on the Pacific coast; the eastern slope of the continent consisting of broken mountain ranges, which exhibit few traces of volcanic action. In fact, they occur almost in a right line, running due N. W. and S. E., commencing with the high volcano of Cartago in Costa Rica (11,480 feet high), from the summit of which both oceans are visible, to Citlaltepetl, in the Department of Vera Cruz, in Mexico. There are several hundred volcanic peaks and extinct craters on this line, the most remarkable of which are Cartago, or Irasu, Turrialva, Barba, and Vatos, (9,840 feet high,) in Costa Rica; Abogado, Cerro Pelas, Miriballes, Tenerio, Rincon de la Vieja, Orosi, Madeira, Ometepec, Zapatero, Guanapepe, Guanacaure, Solentiname, Momobacho, Masaya or Nindiri, Managua, Monotombo, (6,500 feet high,) Las Pilas, Acosusco, Orota, Telica, Santa Clara, El Viejo, (6,000 feet high,) Coseguina, and Joltepec, in Nicaragua; El Tigre, and Nacaome, in Honduras; Amapala or Conchagua, San Salvador, San Miguel, San Vicenté, Isalco, Pancon, and Santa Ana, in San Salvador; Pacaya, Volcan de Agua, Volcan de Fuego, Incontro, Acatenango, Atitlan, Tesamulco, Sapotitlan, Amilpas, Quesaltenango, and Soconusco, in Guatemala. There are

many others which are nameless, or of which the names are unknown. Some ten or twelve of those above named are said to be "*vivo*," alive,—that is to say, they throw out smoke, and exhibit other evidences of vitality. But three or four, however, can be said to be active at present, of which, Isalco, in San Salvador, is the most remarkable, having been formed within the last eighty years, and within the recollection of persons now living.

This volcano, and that of Jorullo, in Mexico, described by Humboldt, are, I believe, all that have originated on the continent since the Discovery. It arose from the plain in 1770, and covers what was then a fine cattle hacienda or estate. The occupants on this estate were alarmed by subterraneous noises, and shocks of earthquakes, about the end of 1769, which continued to increase in loudness and strength until the 23d of the February following, when the earth opened about half-a-mile from the dwellings on the estate, sending out lava, accompanied by fire and smoke. The inhabitants fled; but the *vaqueros*, or herdsmen, who visited the estate daily, reported a constant increase in the smoke and flame, and that the ejection of lava was at times suspended, and vast quantities of ashes, cinders, and stones sent out instead, forming an increasing cone around the vent, or crater. This process was repeated for a long period, but for many years the volcano has thrown out no lava. It has, however, remained in a state of constant eruption, the explosions occurring every sixteen minutes and a quarter, with a noise like the discharge of a park of artillery, accompanied by a dense smoke and a cloud of ashes and stones, which fall upon every side, and add to the height of the cone. It is now about 1,500 or 2,000 feet in height, and I am informed by an intelligent West Indian gentleman, Dr. Drivon, who has known it for the past twenty-five years, that within that period it has increased about one-third. At some times the explosions are more violent than at others,

and the ejected matter greater in amount; but it is said the discharges are always regular. With the wind in a favorable direction, an annoying and sometimes injurious quantity of fine ashes or powder is carried to the city of Sonsonate, twelve miles distant. The volcano of Jorullo rose, I believe, in a single night; but, as we have seen, Isalco is the result of long continued deposits, and it seems to me that most of the volcanoes of Central America, including some of the largest, have been formed in like manner. In fact, I have been a personal witness of the origin of a new volcano, which, if it has not met a premature extinguishment, bids fair to add another high cone to those which now stud the great plain of Leon.

This plain is traversed by a succession of volcanic cones, commencing with the gigantic Momotombo, standing boldly out into the Lake of Managua, and ending with the memorable Coseguina, projecting its base not less boldly into the ocean, constituting the line of the Marabios. Fourteen distinct volcanoes occur within one hundred miles, on this line, all of which are visible at the same time. They do not form a continuous range, but stand singly, the plain between them generally preserving its original level. They have not been "thrust up," as the volcano of Jorullo seemed to have been, elevating the strata around them; although it is not certain but the original volcanic force, being general in its action, raised up the whole plain to its present level. All these are surrounded by beds of lava, *mal pais*, extending, in some cases, for leagues in every direction. The lava current in places seems to have spread out in sheets, flowing elsewhere, however, in high and serpentine ridges, resembling Cyclopean walls, often capriciously enclosing spaces of arable ground, in which vegetation is luxuriant: these are called by the natives *corrales*, yards. Hot springs, and openings in the ground emitting hot air, smoke, and steam, called *infernales*, are common around the bases of these volcanoes. For large

spaces the whole ground seems resting upon a boiling cauldron, and is encrusted with mineral deposits. There are also many places where the ground is depressed and bare, resembling a honey-combed, ferruginous clay-pit, from which sulphurous vapors are constantly rising, destroying vegetation in the vicinity, but especially to the leeward, where they are carried by the wind. By daylight nothing is to be seen at these places, except a kind of tremulous motion of the heated atmosphere near the surface of the ground. But at night, the whole is lighted by a flickering, bluish, and etherial flame, like that of burning spirits, which spreads at one moment over the whole surface, at the next shoots up into high spires, and then diffuses itself again, in a strange, unearthly manner. This is called by the "gente del campo," the people of the fields, "la baile de los Demonios," the Dance of the Devils.

Around some of these volcanoes, that is to say those having visible craters, are many smaller cones, of great regularity, composed of ashes, volcanic sand, and triturated stones, resembling septaria. They seldom support anything but a few dwarf trees, and are covered with coarse grass. This grass, when green, gives them a beautiful emerald appearance. In the dry season this color is exchanged for yellow, which, after the annual burning, gives place to black. They constitute with their changes very singular and striking features in the Central American landscape.

On the 11th and 12th days of April, 1850, rumbling sounds, resembling thunder, were heard in the city of Leon. They seemed to proceed from the direction of the volcanoes, and were supposed to come from the great volcano of Momotombo, which often emits noises, and shows other symptoms of activity, besides sending out smoke. This volcano, however, on this occasion exhibited no unusual indications. The sounds increased in loudness and frequency on the night of the 12th, and occasional tremors of the earth

were felt as far as Leon; which, near the mountains, were quite violent, terrifying the inhabitants. Early on the morning of Sunday, the 13th, an orifice opened near the base of the long-extinguished volcano of Las Pilas, about twenty miles distant from Leon. The throes of the earth at the time of the outburst were very severe in the vicinity, resembling, from the accounts of the natives, a series of concussions. The precise point where the opening was made might be said to be in the plain; it was, however, somewhat elevated by the lava which had ages before flowed down from the volcano, and it was through this bed of lava that the eruption took place. No people reside within some miles of the spot; consequently I am not well informed concerning the earlier phenomena exhibited by the new volcano. It seems, however, that the outburst was attended with much flame, and that, at first, quantities of melted matter were ejected irregularly in every direction. Indeed, this was clearly the case, as was shown upon my visit to the spot some days thereafter. For a wide distance around were scattered large flakes resembling freshly cast iron. This irregular discharge continued only for a few hours, and was followed by a current of lava, which flowed down the slope of the land toward the west, in the form of a high ridge, rising above the tops of the trees, and bearing down everything which opposed its progress. While this flow continued, which it did for the remainder of the day, the earth was quiet, excepting only a very slight tremor, which was not felt beyond a few miles. Upon the 14th, however, the lava stopped flowing, and an entirely new mode of action followed. A series of eruptions commenced, each lasting about three minutes, succeeded by a pause of equal duration. Each eruption was accompanied by concussions of the earth, (too slight, however, to be felt at Leon,) attended also by an outburst of flame, a hundred feet or more in height. Showers of red-hot stones were also ejected with each eruption to the height of several hundred feet.

Most of these fell back into the mouth or crater, the rest falling outward, and gradually building up a cone around it. By the attrition of this process, the stones became more or less rounded, thus explaining a peculiarity in the volcanic stones already alluded to. These explosions continued uninterruptedly for seven days, and could be accurately observed from Leon in the night. Upon the morning of the 22d, accompanied by Dr. J. W. Livingston, U. S. Consul, I set out to visit the spot. No one had ventured near it, but we had no difficulty in persuading some *vaqueros*, from the haciendas of Orota, to act as guides. We rode with difficulty over beds of lava, until within about a mile and a-half of the place, proceeding thence on foot. In order to obain a full view of the new volcano, we ascended a high, naked ridge of scoriæ, entirely overlooking it. From this point it presented the appearance of an immense kettle, upturned, with a hole knocked in the bottom, forming the crater. From this, upon one side ran off the lava stream, yet fervent with heat, and sending off its tremulous radiations. The eruptions had ceased that morning, but a volume of smoke was still emitted, which the strong north-east wind swept down in a trailing current along the tree-tops.

The cone was patched over with yellow, the color of the crystallized sulphur deposited by the hot vapors passing up amongst the loose stones. The trees all around were stripped of their limbs, leaves, and bark, and resembled so many giant skeletons. Tempted by the quietude of the volcano, and anxious to inspect it more closely, in spite of the warnings of our guides, we descended from our position, and going to the windward, scrambled over the intervening lava beds, through patches of thorny cacti and agaves, toward the cone. On all sides we found the flakes of melted matter which had been thrown out on the first day of the eruption, and which had moulded themselves over whatever they fell upon. We had no difficulty in reaching the base of the

cone, the wind driving off the smoke and vapors to the leeward. It was perhaps a hundred and fifty or two hundred feet high, by two hundred yards in diameter at the base, and of great regularity of outline. It was made up entirely of stones, more or less rounded, and of every size, from one pound up to five hundred. No sound was heard when we reached it, except a low, rumbling noise, accompanied by a very slight tremulous motion. Anxious to examine it more closely, and to test the truth of the popular assertion that any marked disturbance near the volcanic vents is sure to bring on an eruption, we prepared to ascend. Fearing we might find the stones too much heated near the summit, to save my hands, I prepared myself with two staffs, as supports. The Doctor disdained such appliances, and started without them. The ascent was very laborious, the stones rolling away beneath our feet, and rattling down the sides. We however almost succeeded in reaching the summit, when the Doctor, who was a little in advance, suddenly recoiled with an exclamation of pain, having all at once reached a layer of stones so hot as to blister his hands at the first touch. We paused for a moment, and I was looking to my footing, when I was startled by an exclamation of terror from my companion, who gave simultaneously an almost superhuman leap down the side. At the same instant a strange roar almost deafened me; there seemed to be a whirl of the atmosphere, and a sinking of the mass upon which I was standing. Quick as thought I glanced upward; the heavens were black with stones, and a thousand lightnings flashed among them. All this was in an instant, and in the same instant I too was dashing down the side, reaching the bottom at the same moment with my companion, and just in time to escape the stones, which fell in rattling torrents where we had stood a moment before. I need not say that in spite of spiny cacti and rugged beds of lava, we were not long in putting a respectable and safe distance between us and the

flaming object of our curiosity. The eruption lasted for nearly an hour, interspersed with lulls, like long breathings. The noise was that of innumerable blast-furnaces in full operation, and the air was filled with projected and falling stones. The subsidence was almost as sudden as the outburst, and we waited several hours in vain for another eruption. Our guides assured us that a second attempt to ascend, or any marked disturbance on the slope, or in the vicinity, would be followed by an eruption, but we did not care to try the experiment.

From that period until I left Central America, I am not aware that there occurred more than one eruption, namely, on the occasion of the falling of the first considerable shower of rain, on, I think, the 27th of the month succeeding that in which the outbreak occurred. Nor have I learned that up to this time this promising young volcano has exhibited any additional active phenomena. I fear that its earlier efforts were too energetic, and that it has gone into a premature decline.

The discharges from this vent, consisting wholly of stones, may have been and probably were peculiar; for the volcanoes themselves, and the cones surrounding them, generally seem to have been made up of such stones, interspersed through large quantities of ashes and scoriaceous sand, alternating with beds of lava.

A few days before our visit, a deputation from the vaqueros and others living in the vicinity of Las Pilas had visited Leon, for the purpose of soliciting the Bishop to go to this place and baptize the prospective volcano, in order to keep it in moderation, and make it observe the proprieties of life. I believe a partial assent was obtained, and the city was full of rumors touching this novel ceremony, which I was exceedingly curious to witness. But its early relapse into quietude dispelled the fears of the people, and the proposed rite was never performed, much to my disappointment, as I intended

to stand as god-father, *compadre*, to the *Volcano de los Nortes Americanos!* This is an old practice, and the ceremony, it is said, was performed, early after the Conquest, on all the volcanoes in Nicaragua, with the exception of Momotombo, which is yet amongst the unsanctified. The old friars who started for its summit, to set up the cross there, were never heard of again.

Although believing that most of the volcanic cones have been formed in the manner above indicated, by gradual accumulations, yet the volcanoes which have shown the greatest energy are low and irregular, and devoid of anything remarkable in their appearance. Such is the Volcano of Coseguina, in Nicaragua, the eruption of which in 1835 was one of the most terrible on record.

On the morning of the 20th of January of that year, several loud explosions were heard for a radius of a hundred leagues around this volcano, followed by the rising of an inky black cloud above it, through which darted tongues of flame resembling lightning. This cloud gradually spread outward, obscuring the sun, and shedding over everything a yellow, sickly light, and at the same time depositing a fine sand, which rendered respiration difficult and painful. This continued for two days, the obscuration becoming more and more dense, the sand falling more thickly, and the explosions becoming louder and more frequent. On the third day the explosions attained their maximum, and the darkness became intense. Sand continued to fall, and people deserted their houses and sheltered themselves under tents of hide in the courts, fearing the roofs might be crushed beneath the weight. This sand fell several inches deep at Leon, more than one hundred miles distant. It fell in Jamaica, Vera Cruz, and Santa Fe de Bogota, over an area of one thousand five hundred miles in diameter. The noise of the explosions was heard nearly as far, and the Superintendent of Belize, eight hundred miles distant, mustered his troops, under the impres-

sion that there was a naval action off the harbor. All Nature seemed overawed; the birds deserted the air, and the wild beasts their fastnesses, crouching, terror-stricken and harmless, in the dwellings of men. The people for a hundred leagues groped, dumb with horror, amidst the thick darkness, bearing crosses on their shoulders and stones on their heads, in penitential abasement and dismay. Many believed the day of doom had come, and crowded with noiseless footsteps over a bed of ashes to the tottering churches, where, in the pauses of the explosions, the voices of the priests were heard in solemn invocation to Heaven. The strongest lights were invisible at the distance of a few feet; and, to heighten the terrors of the scene, occasional lightnings traversed the darkness, shedding a lurid glare over the earth. This continued for forty-three hours, when the shocks of earthquakes and the eruptions ceased, and a brisk wind springing up, the obscuration gradually passed away.

The air was literally filled with an almost impalpable powder, which entered the eyes, ears, and nostrils, and produced a sensation of suffocation, a gasping for breath. At first the doors and windows were closed, but without effect; the exclusion of air, joined to the intense heat, became intolerable. The only relief was found in throwing wetted cloths over their heads. The horses and mules suffered not less than the people; many died, and others were saved only by adopting the same precautions.

For some leagues around the volcano, the sand and ashes had fallen to the depth of several feet. Of course the operations of the volcano could only be known by the results. A crater had been opened, several miles in circumference, from which had flowed vast quantities of lava into the sea on one hand, and the Gulf of Fonseca on the other. The verdant sides of the mountain were now rough, burned, seamed, and covered with disrupted rocks and fields of lava. The quantity of matter ejected was incredible in amount. I

am informed by the captain of a vessel which passed along the coast a few days thereafter, that the sea for fifty leagues was covered with floating masses of pumice, and that he sailed for a whole day through it, without being able to distinguish but here and there an open space of water.

The appearance of this mountain is now desolate beyond description. Not a trace of life appears upon its parched sides. Here and there are openings emitting steam, small jets of smoke and sulphurous vapors, and in some places the ground is swampy from thermal springs. It is said that the discharge of ashes, sand, and lava was followed by a flow of water, and the story seems corroborated by the particular smoothness of some parts of the slope. The height of this mountain is not, I think, more than three thousand five hundred feet.

The anniversary of this eruption is celebrated in the most solemn manner in Nicaragua. I witnessed the ceremony in the church of La Merced, where, in common with all the foreign residents, I was invited by a circular letter as follows:

Leon Enero 20 de 1850.

Por imposicion de las sagradas manos de S. E. Yltma. el dignisimo Sr. Obispo Dr. D. Jorje de Viteri y Ungo, he recibido hoy el orden sacro del Presbiterado; y por su disposicion, subiré al augusto Altar del Eterno á celebrar por la primera vez el tremendo sacrificio, el dia 23 del corriente, *aniversario décimo quinto de la erupcion del volcan de Coseguina*, en la Yglesia de Ntra. Señora de las Mercedes, por cuya poderosa intercesion, salvamos en aquella vez de los peligros que nos amenazaron. Allí predicará el mismo Excmo. Sr., mi amado Prelado.

Tengo el honor de participarlo todo á U., suplicandole su interesante concurrencia, y firmandome con placer, su muy respetuoso seguro servidor y capellan Q. B. S. M.

Rafael Pablo Jerez.

TRANSLATION.

Leon, January 20, 1850.

By the imposition of the sacred hands of His Excellency the most illustrious and most dignified Bishop, Dr. Don Jorge de Viteri y Ungo, I

have this day been invested with the orders of priesthood; and by his direction, will ascend the august Altar of the Eternal, to celebrate for the first time the tremendous sacrifice of the fifteenth anniversary of the eruption of the volcano of Coseguina, on the 23rd inst., in the church of our Lady of Mercies, by whose powerful intercession we were then saved from the dangers which threatened us. There also will preach the same excellent Señor, my beloved prelate.

I have the honor to inform you of this, and to solicit your concurrence. With pleasure I subscribe myself your very respectful, faithful servant and chaplain,

Who kisses your hands,

Rafael Pablo Jerez.

The ceremony was very impressive,[1] and the memory of the terrible event thus commemorated was evidently strong in the minds of those who had witnessed it, and who might be distinguished by their greater gravity and devotion.

It has been observed that any great eruption, like that

[1] Byam, an English traveller, makes the following statement, which is copied without any endorsement of its truth:—

"On the morning of the 23d the fall of ashes became more dense, and the natural grave of man seemed to be rising from the earth instead of being dug in it. The women, with their heads covered with wet linen, to obviate the smothering effect of the falling dust, again hurried to the churches with cries and lamentations, and tried to sing canticles to their favorite saints. As a last resort, every saint in the churches of Leon, without exception, lest he should be offended, was taken from his niche and placed in the open air,—I suppose to enable him to judge from experience of the state of affairs—but still the ashes fell!

"Towards night, however, a mighty wind sprung up from the north, and the inhabitants at last gained a view of the sun's setting rays, gilding their national volcanoes. Of course the cessation of the shower of ashes was attributed to the intercession of these saints, who doubtless wished to get under cover again, which opinion was strongly approved of by the priests, as they would certainly not be the losers by the many offerings; but during a general procession for thanks, which took place the next day, it was discovered that the paint which had been rather clumsily bestowed upon the Virgin's face had blistered from the heat of the numerous candles burned around it, and half Leon proclaimed that she had caught the small-pox during her residence in the city, and in consequence of her anger

above recorded, is often attended by similar phenomena in other and remote localities. Thus, a few weeks after the eruption of Coseguina, the whole of New Granada was convulsed; the subterranean thunder was heard simultaneously in Nicaragua, Popayan, Bogota, Santa Martha, Caraccas, Hayti, Curacoa, and Jamaica. These synchronous evidences of activity in subterranean forces is very well illustrated in the recent earthquakes in Venezuela, Peru, Chili, the Antilles, Central America, Mexico, and California. The centres of greatest violence seem to have been in Costa Rica, Venezuela, and Chili. In Costa Rica the places nearest the volcanoes of Orosi and Cartago suffered most; among these were the cities of San José and Heredia, and the town of Barba. Many churches and private dwellings were thrown down or injured. The shocks occurred on the 18th of March last (1851) at about 8 o'clock in the morning; on the Isthmus of Panama on the 15th of May; in Chile on the 2d of April. The amount of property destroyed in Valparaiso was estimated at a million and a half of dollars. In the island of Guadaloupe the earthquakes commenced on the 16th of May, and continued until the 18th; and in San Francisco they were felt on the 15th of the same month.[1]

The volcano nearest Leon is that of Telica, which is the

the infliction they had just suffered was imposed upon them. Innumerable were the candles burnt before the 'Queen of Heaven,' and many and valuable the offerings to her priests, for the sake of propitiation."—*Wanderings*, p. 37.

[1] A number of severe earthquakes have happened within the last few years. One occurred in Guatemala in 1830, nearly if not quite as severe as that of 1773. In February, 1831, and September, 1839, severe shocks were felt in San Salvador, and in 1841 in Costa Rica. The last nearly destroyed the city of Cartago, which had previously suffered a similar catastrophe. May, 1844, was distinguished throughout Nicaragua by a series of earthquakes occurring at regular intervals, over a period of several days. The city of Nicaragua suffered much, and the waters of the lake were observed to rise and fall with the throes of the earth.

smallest of the group, being not more than three thousand feet high, but exceedingly regular in outline. It has recently been ascended by my friend Prof. JULIUS FRŒBEL, whose interesting account I subjoin:

"From Leon, I made an excursion to the volcanic cone of Telica, which is more easy of ascent than any other peak in the neighborhood. In fact, the road to the summit is more fatiguing than dangerous. I rode one evening to the village of Telica, which is two leagues distant from Leon. I mounted my horse the next morning at 4 o'clock, in company with a good guide, and well provided with water and provisions. At first by moonlight and afterwards in the morning twilight, we rode, slowly ascending, through a thick forest. The path gradually became more steep and rough. As the forests disappeared, savannas followed, which, where they had been recently swept by fire, were clothed with a fresh and tender green. Manifold trees and shrubs, some without leaves, but gay with blossoms, formed park-like groups in the broad mountain meadows. One of these small, elevated valleys was ravishingly beautiful. It was surrounded by the highest summits, whose sides are covered with grass, out of which shoot the single stems of the wine-palm, (*coyol*,) while a little grove of this and other trees, mixed with shrubbery, stood in the lake of grass, six feet deep, which filled the bottom. The coyol-palm furnishes, by tapping, a sweet, cooling, and healthy juice, which is sometimes drunk when fresh and sometimes when undergoing fermentation, under the name of *chicha-coyol*. The nuts which depend from the crown in immense clusters, are about the size of small apples. They are a favorite food of cattle, and are sometimes eaten by the natives; they furnish an oil, which is much finer than the cocoa oil, and is adapted to a variety of uses.

"At last, high above, the grass grows scattered among sharp blocks of lava, which make the road toilsome and dangerous. At the limit of shrubbery we left our horses and all our heavy equipments behind, and continued our journey on foot. In an hour we had reached the summit, and stood on the edge of a crater from two to three hundred feet deep. We lowered ourselves with a rope down a perpendicular wall of rock, from sixty to seventy feet deep, and then clambered toward the centre. The hot steam which here and there came from the damp and heated earth, and a great weakness which I felt in consequence of a violent fit of vomiting that seized me on the way, prevented me from penetrating into the lowest depths. There is little of interest to be seen there, how-

ever: for the crater is filled with fragments which have tumbled down from the side walls, so that, with the exception of some crystals of sulphur and sublimated salts, no substance is to be found which I had not already picked up on the side of the mountain. It is a mass of black, porous lava, faded to a reddish brown on the outside from the effects of the weather, and sprinkled with small crystals of glassy feldspar. On the outside, near the summit, it is frequently raised into oven-shaped curves, with a laminar division of the strata, but generally occurs in angular masses or flat cakes. The whole mountain, like all the cones of this region, has been built up by the masses hurled from its depths. In the crater I found a few small specimens of crystalline lime, and others of a remarkably hard variety of augite. Inside and deep down, there was a small bush, apparently a *vaccinium*, (whortleberry,) with panicles of beautiful white, hirsute, bell-shaped flowers, and some bunches of tasteless blackberries. On the upper edge of the crater I found an *orchidæ*, whose crimson spike of blossoms resembled some varieties of our German orchis. A small fir-tree stood rooted among the rocks near the summit; the other vegetation was grass and a few insignificant weeds.

"The view from the summit is magnificent. Near at hand is the whole group of volcanoes, from Momotombo to Viejo. Behind the former of these flashes the Lake of Managua, a great part of which is visible. Over and beyond it, the landscape is lost in the haze of distance. On the other hand, the eye wanders wide over the uncertain horizon of the Pacific, against which are traced, in sharp outline, the winding bays and headlands of the coast. You can trace its irregular line from the neighborhood of Realejo far to the south-east, and overlook the isthmus between the Ocean and Lake Managua. To the north you have the long mountain chain which stretches from the San Juan River, along the north-eastern shores of Lakes Nicaragua and Managua, through the districts of Chontales, Matagalpa and New Segovia, to the States of Honduras and San Salvador. At the foot of this chain, which is completely separated from the volcanic group of Momotombo, Telica, and Viejo, rise a number of conical hills, some of them in the plain which extends from the north-western extremity of Lake Managua behind the volcanoes, toward the Gulf of Fonseca. The whole view is a splendid picture of plain and mountain, covered with brilliant vegetation as far as the eye can reach, the rich, cultivated plantations being scarcely discernible in the vast space. Here and there the shimmer of a sheet of water enlivens the universal green.

"I reached the village in time to return to Leon the same evening. A few days previously I had visited two sulphur springs at the foot of this

mountain—called respectively San Jacinto and Tisate. At the former place, a hot, insipid, reddish-brown water, whose steam had an acrid, sulphurous flavor, boils up from the soil in numberless small holes. Through the agency of various metallic salts and oxides, the hot, soft clay exhibits all shades of white, yellow, brown, red, green, blue and black, while the soil is crusted with sublimated sulphur and freed salts of different kinds. At the latter place, a sort of ashy gray, boiling slime, or rather clay-broth, is hurled into the air from a small crater. Near it a hill has been formed of the same variegated earths and salts as are seen at San Jacinto. These are two genuine chemical laboratories, where a number of processes are going on. In the clayey slime, penetrated with hot steam, sulphuric acids and gases, I found thousands of shining sulphur pyrites, which, according to all appearances, were constantly forming."

The volcano of El Viejo was ascended in 1838, by Capt. Belcher, of the British Navy, who made its absolute height 5562 feet; but according to my own admeasurements it is just 6000 feet. As the cone of El Viejo rises sheer from the plain, it probably appears much higher than the more elevated peak of Cartago, which rises from an elevated mountain range. Capt. Belcher thus describes his ascent:

"At four P. M., having procured guides, we proceeded to the foot of the mountain, where we designed sleeping. Our journey lay partly through the woods, where the guides halted for a draught of the fermented juice of the palm, which they had prepared in their previous visits, and others were now tapped, in readiness for our return. After scrambling through much loose lava-rock, which I was surprised to see the animals attempt, as it was entirely hidden by long grass, we reached our sleeping station at seven o'clock, when, having picked out the softest stone bed, and tethered our animals, we made the most of our time in the way of sleeping.

"At dawn on the 10th (of February), we remounted our animals, and passed still more difficult ground, until half-past six, when we reached the lower line of the "Pine range," that tree observing a distinct line throughout all these mountain ranges. It became, therefore, a matter of interest to ascertain this elevation, which by barometric data is 3000 feet above the sea level. Temperature at this time (before sunrise) 66° of Fahrenheit.

"Having tethered our beasts, we now commenced our ascent *à pied*. The first efforts, owing to the long grass, were fatiguing, and the mate was

hors du combat before we reached half way. As we ascended, the grass disappeared, the breeze freshened, and spirits rose, and at nine we had turned the lip of the crater. Here I was surprised by a peak presenting itself on the opposite side of the crater, and apparently inaccessible. I nevertheless descended to the edge of the inner cone, from whence I thought I discovered a narrow pass; but it was only by dint of perseverance and determination that we could persuade the guides to re-shoulder the instruments and go ahead. Difficulties vanished as we proceeded, and we found a path beaten by the wild bullocks, which led to the very peak. Here I obtained the requisite observations for determining the position and height. The range of the temperature here during our stay (from half past ten until half past one) was from 77° to 80° Fahrenheit.

"I was unfortunate in the day; it blew freshly (although calm at the base), was hazy, and excepting high peaks and headlands, I lost the most interesting minutiæ. The volcano now consists of three craters. The outer one is about fifteen hundred feet in diameter, having the peak, or highest lip, on the western edge. Within, it is precipitous, for the depth of about one hundred and fifty feet. From the inner base, at that depth, rises the second inner volcano, to the height of about eighty feet, having within it still another cone. Around the western base of the first or inner, the cliffs rise precipitously, with luxuriant pines growing from the vertical face. Here vapors arise from many points, and doubtless to this cause they are indebted for their peculiarly healthy and vigorous condition. No minerals worthy of carriage were discovered. We had been informed that sulphur was abundant, but those who descended to look for it found none. Here there was a hot spring, the temperature of which exceeded the range of my thermometers, doubtless coming up to the boiling point. The view was very beautiful; the map of the country was at my feet; even the main features of the Lake of Managua were visible. *Mem.* People who ascend high mountains, with weak heads and weaker stomachs, should reserve spirits for cases of necessity only—as medicine!"[1]

Besides the hot springs mentioned by Capt. Belcher, at the summit of El Viejo, there are also orifices emitting rills of smoke, which, under favorable states of the asmosphere, may be seen from Leon. When the pirate Dampier was on this coast, this volcano exhibited unmistakable signs of life;

[1] "Voyage Round the World," vol. i. p. 162.

for this old voyager states expressly that it was an "exceedingly high mountain, smoking all day, and sending out flames at night."[1]

The great plain of Leon, at its highest part, is elevated about two hundred feet above the sea; yet in the vicinity of the range of volcanoes which traverses it, in digging wells, beds of lava, fifteen feet thick, have been found, at the depth of seventy-five Spanish varas, or about two hundred and ten feet, and this at a point not the highest of the plain, but according to my calculations only one hundred and thirty feet above the ocean. Unless there is some great error in these data, and I can discover of none, they would seem to prove that there has been a subsidence of the plain since the almost infinitely remote period when the stream of lava flowed upwards from the depths of the earth. I may mention that in the vicinity of the volcanoes, water is scarce, and can only be obtained by digging to great depths. The particular well to which I refer is at the cattle estate *de las Palmas*, eighteen miles north-east of Leon, and is upward of three hundred feet in depth, the water pure, with no saline materials in solution.

Much might be said on the phenomena of earthquakes as they occur in this country. The shocks seem to be of two classes; the perpendicular, which are felt only in the vicinity of volcanoes, and the horizontal, which reach over wide tracts of country. The latter are very unequal; in some places being violent, and in others, nearer their assumed source, comparatively slight. The undulating movement seems to be only a modification of the horizontal or vibratory. Sometimes these motions are all combined, or rather succeed each other with great rapidity. Such was the case with the earthquake of the 27th of October, 1850, which I experienced, and of which I can speak authoritatively. It occurred at

[1] "Voyage Round the World," vol. i. p. 119.

about one o'clock in the morning. I was aroused from sleep by a strong undulatory motion, which was sufficiently violent to move my bed several inches backward and forth on the rough paved floor, and to throw down books and other articles which had been placed on my table. The tiles of the roof were also rattled together violently, and the beams and rafters creaked like the timbers of a deeply-laden vessel in a heavy sea. The people all rushed from their houses in the greatest alarm, and commenced praying in loud tones. The domestic animals seemed to share the general consternation; the horses struggled as if to loose themselves, and the dogs commenced a simultaneous barking. This undulatory motion lasted nearly a minute, steadily increasing in violence, until suddenly it changed into a rapid vibratory or horizontal motion, which rendered it difficult to stand upright. This lasted about thirty seconds, and was followed as suddenly by a vertical movement, or a series of shocks, such as one would experience in being rapidly let down a flight of steps, then declined in violence, but nevertheless seemed to stop abruptly. The whole lasted about two minutes, and can be compared to nothing except the rapid movement of a large and loaded railroad car over a bad track, in which there are undulations, horizontal irregularities, and breaks.

No considerable damage was done. Some old walls were thrown down, but in various places in the country I afterwards observed that rocks had been detached and portions of cliffs broken off by the shocks. The thick adobe walls of my house were cracked in several places from top to bottom. Many other buildings suffered in like manner. The motion which seemed most dangerous to me was that which I have described as *horizontal*, in which the earth seemed to slide away from beneath my feet.

The night was clear moonlight, and it was very still; not a breath of air seemed stirring. The orange trees in my

courtyard, during the continuance of the undulations, swayed regularly to and fro; but when the other movements followed, they had an unsteady or tremulous motion. The water in my well, which was very deep, seemed also much agitated. The direction of the undulations was from north to south, and they were felt throughout the entire State of Nicaragua, and in Honduras and San Salvador, and even perhaps beyond these limits.

I learned from old residents, that, as compared with the others which have occurred within the last quarter of a century, this earthquake ranked as about seven, the maximum being ten.

All observers here concur in saying that, while earthquakes are common at all times of the year, they are much more numerous and violent at the entrance and close of the two seasons, the wet and the dry; that is, about the last of October and the first of November, and the last of April and the first of May. They are observed as particularly numerous and strong after the heavy rains, at the close of the wet season in October. It is also observed that a general quiet seems to prevail, for a period, both before and after their occurrence.[1]

[1] Oviedo observes respecting the earthquakes of the country, that "they are frequent at the time of storms,—though to tell the truth, rain rarely falls. These shocks," he adds, "are not light, but are real earthquakes, very severe and very long. During my stay in this city, I have seen some violent ones, so much so as to compel us to abandon the houses, through fear of being crushed to death beneath them, and to take refuge in the streets and squares. I have counted upwards of sixty shocks within twenty-four hours, and that for several days. During the shocks the lightning struck and inflamed houses. All this I saw at Leon, but certainly these earthquakes cannot be compared with those of the city of Pozzuoli, which I saw completely overthrown by an earthquake, of the same kind with those at Leon. If this last mentioned city had been built of stone, like those of Spain, it would soon have been destroyed, with great loss of lives."

It is difficult to discover the connection between these different phenomena, but there seems to be a concurrence as to the facts here stated. It is certainly true, that the only shocks which I have felt were in the periods indicated, and it is also certain that nearly all occur in the night. Perhaps, amidst the occupations and distractions of the day, the lesser ones pass unobserved.

There are many striking features in the topography of Central America, which seem entirely due to volcanic agency. Those which have more particularly attracted my attention, are what are popularly denominated extinct craters, now partially filled with water, forming lakes without outlets or apparent sources of supply, save the rains. Some of these occur on the mountain and hill ranges, and are surrounded by evidences of having been volcanic vents. But this is not always the case. The Lake of Masaya, which I have already described, may be taken as an example. It is not less than eight or ten miles in circumference, and is not far from one thousand feet, perhaps more, below the general level of the country. The sides are sheer precipices of trachytic rocks, splintered and blistered, and exhibiting every indication of having been exposed to the intensest heat. Yet, if these were true craters, where are the lava, ashes, and other materials which they have ejected? There are certainly none in their vicinity, which have emanated from them, no traces of lava streams surrounding them, nor are their edges elevated above the general level. Upon one side of the particular one which I have mentioned, rises the extinct volcano of Masaya or Nindiri, with its proper crater, whence have flowed vast quantities of lava, part of which, falling over the precipitous walls of the lake, have quite filled it upon that side. Some of the lakes are more or less impregnated with saline materials, but others are perfectly fresh, and abound in fish. The burned and blistered walls indicate,

it appears to me, that they have not been caused by the subsidence, or the falling in of the earth.

Oviedo makes special mention of the range of volcanoes to which I have so often alluded, which he calls by the aboriginal name, "Marabios." At the time of his visit, some of them were active, or rather sent out large quantities of smoke. These were probably Santa Clara and Telica, which appear to have been most recently in a state of eruption. He says, "About the centre of this chain three peaks can be distinguished, rising one behind the other. They are very steep on the north side, and descend gradually to the plain on the southern. This country is very fertile; and as the east winds reign here continually, the western portion is always covered with smoke, proceeding from these three mountains, the most elevated of the chain, and five or six leagues in circumference. The volcano the nearest to the city of Leon (Telica) is four or five leagues off. It sometimes happens, when the north wind blows strong, that the smoke, instead of escaping on the western side, as usual, takes a southern course; then it scorches and withers the maize fields and other productions of the soil, and causes great mischief in the villages, which are numerous. The ground suffers to such a degree from the heat, that it remains arid for four or five years after."

I have elsewhere introduced Oviedo's account of his visit to the volcano of Masaya. In another part of his MS., the chronicler gives a summary of the relation of the Fray Blas de Castillo, who, in 1834, descended into the crater of this volcano. It seems that in his narrative the Fray referred to the Historian in such a manner as to excite his anger, and in consequence he indulges in several pungent little episodes in the resumé, of which the following is a very fair example: "It is a hard matter," observes Oviedo, "to contradict all the falsehoods diffused through the world; and even if suc-

cessful in so doing, it is a matter of greater difficulty to undeceive those who have heard them. Now if the Fray Blas de Castillo had thought that his account would one day fall into my hands, he would not have said that I, Gonzales Hernandez de Oviedo y Valdez, Chronicler General of the Indies, had asked permission of his Majesty to place the volcano of Masaya on my coat of arms, because I had happened to visit it. I have never made such a request; I have no desire to carry such arms; nor do I think any Christian would approve of it; the Fray has lied!"[1]

The descent of the Fray Blas was conducted with great secrecy, and under the full belief that the molten matter seen at the bottom of the crater was gold or silver. "This matter," he says, "resembles a red sea, and its commotions make as much noise as do the waves of the ocean when they dash against the rocks. This sea looks like the metal of which bells are made, or sulphur or gold, in a state of fusion, except that it is covered with a black scum, two or three fathoms thick. Were it not for this mass of scum, or scoriæ, the fire would throw out such an ardor and lustre that it would be impossible to remain near it, or look upon it. Sometimes it breaks apart in certain places, and then one can perceive the matter, red and brilliant as the light of heaven. In the midst constantly rise two large masses of melted metal, four or five fathoms across, which are con-

[1] Although Oviedo denies so indignantly that he received the volcano of Masaya as a device on his coat of arms, yet, having resided thirty years under the tropics, the Emperor Charles V. gave him the four beautiful stars of the Southern Cross as amorial bearings. This method of rewarding men was common in the active period following the Discovery. Thus Columbus received, as the chronicler words it "para sublimarlo," to honor him, the first map of America, — a range of islands in front of a Gulf: Sebastian de Elcano, the first circumnavigator of the globe, a globe with the inscription, "Primus circumdedisti me:" and Diego de Ordaz, who first ascended the volcano of Orizaba, a drawing of that high and conical mountain.

stantly free from the scum, and from which the liquid metal leaps forth on every side. The sound of these melted streams, dashing amongst the rocks, is like that of artillery battering the walls of a city. The rocks around this sea of metal are black to the height of seven or eight fathoms, which proves that the liquid matter sometimes rises to that distance. Upon the north-eastern side of the crater is the opening of a cavern, very deep, and as wide as the range of an arquebus. A stream of burning fluid flows into this cavern, which seems to be the outlet of the crater. It runs for a few moments, stops, then commences again, and so on constantly. There comes forth from this cavern a thick smoke, greater than rises from the whole lake, which diffuses on all sides a very strong odor. There comes forth also, a heat and brilliancy which cannot be described. During the night the summit of the mountain is perfectly illuminated, as are also the clouds, which seem to form a kind of *tiara* above it, which may be seen eighteen or twenty leagues on the land, and upwards of thirty at sea. The darker the night the more brilliant the volcano. It is worthy of remark, that neither above nor below can the least flame be seen, except when a stone or arrow is thrown into the crater, which burns like a candle.

"During rains and tempests, the volcano is most active; for when the storm reaches its height, it makes so many movements that one might say it was a living thing. The heat is so great that the rain is turned into vapor before reaching the bottom of the crater, and entirely obscures it. Both Indians and Spaniards affirm, that since the Conquest, during a very rainy year, the burning metal rose to the top of the crater, and that the heat was then so great that everything was burnt for a league around. Such a quantity of burning vapor came from it, that the trees and plants were dried up for more than two leagues. Indeed, one cannot behold the volcano without fear, admiration, and repentance

of his sins; for it can be surpassed only by the eternal fire. Some confessors have imposed no other penance than to visit this volcano."

Oviedo adds, that, although no animals were to be found on the volcano or its slopes, paroquets abounded, both on the summit of the mountain and within the crater, at the time the volcano was still active. The Fray Blas made two descents into the crater, and by means of a chain lowered an iron bucket into the molten mass of lava. He was much disappointed in procuring only a mass of gray pumice, when he had expected to find pure silver or gold. The second descent was performed in the presence of the Governor, who afterwards forbade any similar enterprises. The fires are now cold in the crater, and the "Hell of Masaya" is extinguished.

THE PAROQUET.

CHAPTER XX.

CHRISTMAS—NACIMIENTOS—THE CATHEDRAL ON CHRISTMAS EVE—MIDNIGHT CEREMONIES—AN ALARM—ATTEMPT AT REVOLUTION—FIGHT IN THE PLAZA—TRIUMPH OF ORDER—THE DEAD—MELANCHOLY SCENES—A SCHEME OF FEDERATION.

CHRISTMAS is celebrated with much ceremony in all Catholic countries; and upon my return to Leon, I found the Señoras of the city busily engaged in preparing for it. I was delighted to learn that we were to have something a little different from the eternal *bombas* and interminable processions. In nearly every house, a room was set apart for a representation of the *nacimiento*, or birth, in which the taste of the mistresses was variously exhibited. When these are arranged, on the evening before Christmas, they are thrown open to inspection, and for a week the principal business of the women and children is to go from house to house, to see the *nacimientos*, criticise, and institute comparisons. I saw but two, at the houses respectively of Gen. Muñoz, and my friend Col. Zapata. In each case the representation filled an entire half of a large room. Two or three young palms were set on each side of the apartment, so as to embower a kind of grotto, covered all over with brilliant shells and stones, and draped with vines and flowers. Within this grotto was a miniature figure of the Virgin and the Infant Jesus, surrounded by the kneeling figures of the Magi, Saint Joseph, "Nuestra Señor San Joaquin," and "Nuestra Señora Santa Ana," the husband of Mary, and the accredited grandfather and grandmother of the holy babe.

The room was darkened, and the effect very beautiful; for the whole was brilliantly illuminated by concealed candles, and the figures multiplied, and the perspective rendered almost interminable by small, but artfully arranged mirrors. A railing prevented any one from approaching so near as to weaken the effect, or discover the arrangement. At this time everybody, whatever his condition, is allowed to enter, unquestioned, into every house which has its nacimiento; and it was a singular spectacle to witness brawny Indians, naked children, and gayly-dressed Señoras grouped together, and gazing in decorous silence upon a spectacle so closely interwoven with their traditions, and suggestive of the most cherished doctrines of their church. Señora Zapata carried off the palm of honor; her nacimiento was not more tastefully nor more expensively got up than the others; but she had put a music-box, with a boy to wind it up, behind the scenes, which regularly tinkled through its round of tunes, commencing with the "Marsellaise," and ending with "A Life on the Ocean Wave." This was unanimously voted to be about "the thing," and the little Indians of Subtiaba thronged the Colonel's doors from early dawn to midnight, unwearied listeners to the unseen musician, and no doubt believing that the melodies were produced by the extraordinary Magi who knelt so stiffly and grim around the Virgin Mother. The exhibition of the nacimiento continues for nine days, and the period is therefore sometimes called a *Novena*.

But the crowning features of Christmas were the ceremonies on the eve of that day, in the Cathedral. Here, back of the great altar, was a representation of the adoration of the Magi on a grand scale. Large trees bent above the stable occupied by the Holy Family, and the figures introduced were nearly as large as life. Heavy curtains hung from the ceiling upon either hand, behind which strong lights threw a flood of radiance upon the scene, while the rest of the great temple was shrouded in darkness, or but dimly revealed

by the reflected light, and by the lamps of the musicians in the choir, and of the chanting priests in the nave beneath it. It was hardly dark before the people began to gather from all parts of the city, including hundreds who had come from the neighboring villages. When I reached the Cathedral, the entire central aisle was filled with kneeling women, their heads shrouded in their rebosos, or covered with mantillas, gazing in silence upon the holy group, while the music of the choir and the monotonous chants of the priests seemed to be almost lost amongst the columns and arches, in low, wandering echoes. As the night advanced, the devotional feelings of the silent multitude became roused, a hum of prayer filled the Cathedral, and as midnight approached, many of the women seemed lost in wild, religious fervor; the notes of the musicians, and the voices of the priests, before subdued, now rose high and exultant; and when the clock announced midnight, all the bells of the city struck up a joyful chime, and the vast auditory rising to its feet, joined in the triumphant refrain, "Jubilate! Christ is born!" A procession of priests advanced, and the Virgin and Son were reverently placed upon a crimson cushion, and beneath a silken canopy, supported by rods of silver, they were carried out into the plaza, where the military, with arms presented, heads uncovered, and bending on one knee, paid their adoration, while the procession moved slowly around the square, repeating, "Hosannah! hosannah! Christ is born!" How late the ceremonies continued I know not, for I went home and to bed, not a little impressed by the scene which I had witnessed.

But little more than a week after this, I was witness of a widely different scene in the same plaza. It was a quiet and exceeding beautiful afternoon. An American friend from Honduras had dined with me, and we were discussing a luscious papaya, preparatory to the afternoon siesta in the hammocks under the corridor, when we heard a sudden firing

in the direction of the plaza. The sound of the discharges appeared to me to be singularly distinct and emphatic, but supposing that some fiesta was in progress, with the usual *bomba* accompaniment, I made no remark. The discharges continued, and became more general, and shortly after Ben entered the room hurriedly, and touching his hat said, "Sir, I think there's a revolution!"

"Oh, no, Ben, it is only some fiesta."

"But, sir, the spent balls have fallen in the court!"

I had no time to reply, before the alarm, "Un asalto de las armas!" was raised in the streets, and the next moment a crowd of women and children, terror depicted in every face, rushed through the open *zaguan*, and along the corridors. These were followed by a confused mass, bare-headed, and in the greatest disorder, which came pouring over the walls into my courtyard. They all crowded around me for protection. Amongst them were a dozen young men, who should have taken their arms, and rallied to the aid of the authorities, but who stood here pale and craven. My predominant feeling towards these was anger and contempt; and I directed Ben to raise the United States flag, and stationed my American friend with a drawn sword at the door, with orders to admit all women, children, and old men, but not to allow a single able-bodied man to enter. While this was going on, the firing continued, and women, with trunks, boxes, and bundles, containing their valuables, thronged into my house for safety, filling the rooms and corridors, and huddling in groups in the courtyard. Some prayed, and others ran wildly here and there in quest of their children, or husbands, or brothers, wringing their hands, and appealing to me to save them.

The whole affair was a surprise, and comprehending how important to the country was interior quiet at this moment, I instantly determined to encounter all risks, and endeavor to put a stop to the outbreak before it should proceed to gene-

ral hostilities. Accompanied by Ben, I mounted my horse and started for the plaza. The streets were filled with the flying, terrified inhabitants, who, in reply to every question, only ejaculated, "Un asalto de las armas!" and pointed hopelessly in the direction of the plaza. At the first corner I met Dr. Clark returning from visiting a patient in the suburbs, and tossing him a pistol, he joined us. At that moment, the President of the State, accompanied by his secretary, dashed past us towards the seat of the commotion. We followed; but the firing now slackened, and just as we reached the plaza, ceased altogether. The smoke rose a little as we entered, and I was rejoiced to see the erect form of General Muñoz, at the head of a column of veterans, advancing with fixed bayonets towards the principal cuartel. The next moment he commanded a halt, and his men deployed into line. He strode down the ranks, leading off in the shout, "Viva el Gobierno Supreme! Mueran á los enemigos del orden!" in which the men joined in a half frantic tone of exultation.

The soldiers now caught sight of me, and spontaneously commenced cheering for the United States; the Bishop, who had made his appearance on the balcony of his house, joining in the shouts. The General advanced, and shaking my hand, said rapidly, all was over and all was well, and then, with the promptitude of a man equal to every emergency, detached the various divisions of his men to the more important points in the city. The soldiers defiled past, and at the head of a detachment, his eyes flashing with excitement, and every movement indicating the energy of his character, was the negro officer to whom I have elsewhere referred. I observed that his sword was dripping with blood.

The movement of the soldiers disclosed the front of the general cuartel, and exposed a spectacle such as I hope never again to see. Beneath the archway, still clutching

their weapons, were the bodies of two men, who seemed to have been killed in endeavoring to force an entrance; while a little in front, his garments saturated with blood, was the body of a well-dressed man, over whom a woman was kneeling. Her hands were clasped upon his shoulders, and she was gazing with an expression of unutterable anguish into his fixed, cold eyes. I rode nearer, and recognized in the person of the dead man my friend Don José Maria Morales, Magistrate of the Supreme Court of Justice, who, at the first alarm, had rushed to the support of the Government, and had fallen a victim to his zeal. The woman was his sister, who seeing him engaged, regardless of all danger, had penetrated the array of combatants, to his side. But it was too late; he could only ejaculate "mi hermana!" my sister, and died in her arms. The spectacle was most affecting; and the tears glistened in the eyes of the rude men who stood around the living and the dead.

I turned from this sad spectacle, and then observed, drawn up in front of the Cathedral, a body of some two hundred citizens, who, at the instant the commotion was known, had repaired, arms in hand, to the plaza. This was the first time they had done so for years, and it afforded the best evidence of the spirit which hope had infused into the hitherto despondent people of the country. It showed that they were now determined to maintain public order, and instead of flying to the fields upon the first symptoms of disturbance, to stand by their families and property, and defend their rights and their homes.

When I reached my house, I found that the crowd of refugees had already nearly dispersed. They were used to these things; revolutions with them were like thunder storms, here one moment, gone the next. My rooms nevertheless were still encumbered with valuables, and during the rest of the afternoon, in anticipation of every contingency, packages of papers and of money continued to come in. I

will venture to say, more than a hundred thousand dollars in gold was brought to my room, within the space of two hours, and chiefly by persons who were not suspected of having an extra medio in the world. Experience had taught them the necessity of keeping a sum of ready money at hand, in event of revolution; and also of keeping it so completely concealed, as not to excite a suspicion of their possessing it. I placed it all within a large chest, where most of it remained for two or three months, until all symptoms of disorder had passed away.

The city was full of rumors concerning the *escaramuza*, and it was not until late in the evening, when I was called upon by Señor Buitrago, Secretary of War, that I learned the facts in the case. It proved that the assault was made by a party of disaffected men belonging to the Barrio of the Laberinto, in which is concentrated the worst part of the population of the city, under the lead of two men of notorious character, who had both been killed, and whose bodies I had seen beneath the archway of the cuartel. Their plans had been matured with the profoundest secrecy, and evidently by men moving in a different sphere of life, and having the control of considerable ready money. The time and mode of the attack had been well chosen. During the festivals of Christmas and the New Year, a large number of cane booths had been erected in the plaza; and the conspirators, half a dozen at a time, had entered the square, and dispersed themselves amongst these booths, concealing their arms beneath their clothes. In this manner several hundreds had come in unsuspected. The point of attack was the Cuartel General, in which the arms of the State are deposited, and at the entrance of which only a half dozen men were on guard; the rest of the little garrison, at this time of the day, being occupied with their dinner. A few of the leading facciosos carelessly advanced in front of the building, as if to pass it, and then make a sudden rush upon the little guard, with the

view of disarming them, and taking the rest by surprise. The movement was made, and in an instant the conspirators in the booths advanced from their concealment, shouting, "Down with the Government!" The little guard at the gate was overpowered, and had it not been for the negro officer Clemente Rodriguez, it is likely the cuartel would have been captured. He was stationed at the opposite side of the square, at the cabildo, with a picquet guard of thirty men. Seeing the commotion, and supposing there was a revolt among the men of the principal cuartel, he ordered his guard to fire upon the confused mass which had collected in front of it. His example was followed by the guard at the Government House and the Cathedral. Distracted by this unexpected demonstration in their rear, the facciosos hesitated, affording time for the garrison to recover their arms. This was the critical moment, and Clemente, charging with fixed bayonets, decided the struggle, killing the leader of the insurgents with his own hands. In a few minutes the General, at the head of the company stationed at the Church of the Mercedes, reached the plaza. But the facciosos were all gone, no one knew where. They had mingled with the populace, the instant they saw that failure was inevitable, and no doubt hurrahed as loudly for the Government five minutes thereafter, as if they had always been its warmest supporters.

The vigilance of the authorities was again roused; and the city, for a month, wore something of the aspect which it bore upon our arrival. A number of arrests were made, but the details and instigators of the plot were never discovered. There were some facts disclosed, however, which would hardly be credited in the United States, where foreign intrigue never attempts the direct subversion of the government, and which I therefore pass over in silence.

Two days after this event, the body of Señor Morales was buried, with striking and unaffected demonstrations of sorrow

The corpse was followed to the grave by all the officers of the garrison, and minute guns were fired from the plaza during the burial. Scarcely a week elapsed, before the broken-hearted sister, prostrated by the catastrophe of her brother's death, was laid beside him in the Church of La Merced. The negro officer, Rodriguez, for his decision and bravery, was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

During the month of November, the Commissioners of Honduras, San Salvador, and Nicaragua had been in session, in the city of Leon, and had agreed upon the basis of a union of these States, the terms of which were promulgated about this period, for the first time. The arrangement looked to an immediate or speedy consolidation, for the purpose of conducting the foreign relations of the country, and to an early union on the plan of a federation, leaving it optional with the States of Guatemala and Costa Rica to accede to the compact. This policy was opposed by the old aristocratic or monarchical faction, or rather the remnants of it; and they, it is believed, were at the bottom of the disturbances to which I have referred. In Honduras, in the month following, they attempted a revolution, with the view of preventing the contemplated union; and although they there met with better success at the outset than in Nicaragua, they signally failed in the end, notwithstanding that they had the countenance and support of the British officials in the country; who, at this time, both in Costa Rica and in Guatemala, by publications and otherwise, not only denounced the whole plan of federation, and what they called the "American Policy," but threatened to break it down, whenever its organization should be attempted.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE "PASEO AL MAR"—PREPARATIONS FOR THE ANNUAL VISIT TO THE SEA—THE MIGRATION—IMPROMPTU DWELLINGS—INDIAN POTTERS—THE SALINES—THE ENCAMPMENT—FIRST IMPRESSIONS—CONTRABANDA—OLD FRIENDS—THE CAMP BY MOONLIGHT—PRACTICAL JOKES—A BRIEF ALARM—DANCE ON THE SHORE—UN JUEGO—LODGINGS, CHEAP AND ROMANTIC—AN OCEAN LULLABY—MORNING—SEA BATHING—ROUTINE OF THE PASEO—DIVERTISEMENTS—RETURN TO LEON.

Amongst the amusements of the people of Nicaragua, or rather of those residing on the Plain of Leon, I ought perhaps to number "El Paseo al Mar," or annual visit to the Pacific. The fashionables of our cities flock, during "the season," to Saratoga or Newport, but those of Leon go to the sea. And although the Paseo is a different thing from a season at the Springs, yet it requires an equal amount of preparation, and is talked about, both before and after, in very much the same strain and quite as abundantly. It is the period for flirtations, and general and special love-making,—in short, it is the festival of St. Cupid, whose devotees, the world over, seem more earnest and constant than those of any canonized saint in the calendar.

I had heard various allusions to the Paseo al Mar, during the rainy season, but they were not the most intelligible. When the dry season set in, however, they became more frequent and distinct, and by the middle of January the subject of the Paseo became the absorbing topic of conversation. The half naked muchachos in the streets seemed inspirited

with the knowledge of its near approach; and even my venerable cook began a series of diplomatic advances to ascertain whether it was my intention "to do in Rome as the Romans do," and join in the general migration. The inquiry was made directly by a number of the Señoras, and the wife of one of my official friends, whose position enabled her to trench a little on conventional restrictions, plumply invited me to join her party. And yet the Paseo was not to come off until the moon of March, two months in the future.

At that time the dry season begins really to be felt; the crops are gathered, the rank vegetation is suspended, the dews are comparatively light, the sky is serene and cloudless, storms are unknown, and the moon rules at night with unwonted brightness and beauty. The dust in the cities becomes annoying, and trade languishes. It is just the season for mental relaxation and physical enjoyment. At that time too, the salt marshes near the sea become dry, and the mosquitos defunct. In short, the conditions for a pleasant Paseo are then perfected.

The preliminary arrangements are made during the week preceding the first quarter of the new moon. At that time a general movement of carts and servants takes place in the direction of the sea, and the Government despatches an officer and a guard to superintend the pitching of the annual camp upon the beach, or rather upon the forest-covered sand-ridge which fringes the shore. Each family, instead of securing rooms at the "Ocean House" or a cottage on the "Drive," builds a temporary cane hut, lightly thatched with palm-leaves, and floored with petates or mats. The whole is wickered together with vines, or woven together basket-wise, and partitioned in the same way, or by means of colored curtains of cotton cloth. This constitutes the penetralia, and is sacred to the "bello sexo" and the babies. The more luxurious ladies bring down their neatly-curtained beds, and make no mean show of elegance in the interior arrange-

ment of their impromptu dwellings. Outside, and something after the fashion of their permanent residences, is a kind of broad and open shed, which bears a very distant relation to the corridor. Here hammocks are swung, here the families dine, the ladies receive visitors, and the men sleep. It is the grand sala, the comedor, and the dormitório para los hombres.

The establishments here described pertain only to the wealthier visitors, the representatives of the upper classes. There is every intermediate variety, down to those of the mozo and his wife, who spread their blankets at the foot of a tree, and weave a little bower of branches above them,—an affair of ten or a dozen minutes. And there are yet others who disdain even this exertion, and nestle in the loose, dry sand,—a cheap practice which I should straightway recommend, were it not for anticipating my story.

"The ides of March," it was unanimously voted by impatient Señoritas, were a long time in coming, and great were the rejoicings on the eventful evening when the crescent moon—auspicious omen!—revealed its delicate horn when the sun went down in the west. A day or two after, the Paseo commenced in earnest; horses, mules, and carts, were all put in requisition, and when I took my evening ride, I observed that our favorite balconies were nearly every one empty. There were a few which yet retained their fair occupants, but the silvery, half-apologetical "mañana,"—"to-morrow," which answered our salutations, explained that these too would soon flit after their companions.

Business intervened to keep me in the city, which, deserted by full half of its population, now looked dull and desolate, and it was not until the fourth day, that I could arrange to take my share in the "Paseo." It was five leagues to the sea, and we waited until nearly sunset before starting. Through Subtiaba,—also half deserted, for the Paseo is the perpetuation of a semi-religious, Indian custom,—

along the pleasant stream which skirts it, winding now between high hedge-rows, among the tall forest-trees, or spurring across the open "*jicorals*," yellow from the drought, here passing a creaking cart, enveloped in a cloud of dust, filled with women and children, or with fruits and vegetables, and anon overtaking a party of caballeros, each with a gaily-dressed girl mounted on the saddle before him, with a reboso thrown loosely over her head and a lighted *puro* in her mouth, which, as we gallop past she removes for an instant, to cheer "al mar! al mar!" to the sea! to the sea!—thus on, on, until rising a swell of open land, we look over a league of flat country, shrouded in forest, out upon the expanse of the Pacific! The sun has gone down, the evening star trembles on the verge of the horizon, and the young moon struggles with the twilight, high and clear in the empyrean. A mile farther, and we reach a hollow, at the bottom of which is a stream, and from it comes a confused sound of many voices, wild laughter, and the echo of obstreperous songs. We involuntarily stop our horses, and look down upon a crowd of men and animals, drinking at the stream or struggling to approach it,—the whole swaying and incongruous mass but half revealed by the ruddy light of large fires, quivering on rock and tree, and on the shifting groups, in strong contrast with the broad bars of moonlight which fall, calm and clear, through the openings of the trees. This is the grand watering place for the encampment, where all the horses are twice a day brought to drink, and these are the mozos, upon whom the task of attending to them devolves. The fires proceed from rude kilns in which the Indian potter is baking his wares, and standing beside a heap of newly-made vessels is his wife, who cries—

"Cantáras, cantáras nuevas,
Queira á comprar?"

We passed through the groups of men and animals with

difficulty, and after a short ride beneath the shadows of a dense forest, came upon what are called the Salines,—broad open spaces, in the rainy season covered with water, but now dry, and hard, and white with an incrustation of salt. In the moonlight they resembled fields of snow, across which wound the black and well-beaten road. Between the Salines and the sea there is a broad, dry swell or elevation of sand, which seems to have been formed by the waves of the ocean, and which is covered with trees. Amongst these we could distinguish the lights of many fires; and as we approached, we heard bursts of merry laughter, and in the pauses between them, the tinkling of musical instruments. We spurred forward, and were soon in the midst of a scene as novel as it was inspiriting. There were broad avenues of huts, festooned with hammocks in front, in which the Señoritas were reclining, in lively conversation with their red-sashed beaus, who idly thrummed their guitars, while the elders of both sexes, seated in the background, puffed their puros and cigaritos, pictures of indolence and physical ease. Flanking the huts were covered carts, within and beneath which children were playing in an ecstacy of glee. Behind, the cattle were tethered to the trees; and here too were the fires for culinary purposes, around which the *cocineras*, chattering like parrots, were preparing the evening cup of chocolate. Now we passed an open, brilliantly lighted hut, in which dulces, wines, and cigars were displayed on shelves twined round with evergreens. In front a dextrous tumbler exhibited his feats for the entertainment of the claret-sipping customers of the establishment, from whom he extracted an occasional *medio* for his pains. Near by, an Indian girl, seated on a mat, exposed a basket of fruits for sale, while another paraded a little stock of gaudy ribbons, to tempt the fancy of some young coquette. In the centre of the encampment, under the shadow of a species of banyan tree, which spread out its foliage like the roof of a dwelling, and

sent down half a hundred distinct trunks to the earth,—here was the station of the guard of police, a detachment of soldiers from the garrison of Leon, whose duty it was, not only to preserve order, but to keep a sharp lookout for contraband aguardiente, the sale of which, except in small quantities, at the government *estanco*, is strictly prohibited. The prohibition did not extend to the fermented *chicha*, or palm-juice, which bacchanalian looking Indians, exhibiting in their own persons the best evidences of its potency, carried round in open calabashes, at a quartillo the *jicora*, equal to about a pint.

The officer of the guard recognized our party, and before I was aware of the movement, the soldiers had fallen into line and presented arms. This was the signal for a general huddle of the idlers. I entered an instant and half-indignant protest against all demonstrations of the kind, and told the commandant that I had left the American Minister at my house in Leon, and had come down to the sea as a simple *paisano*, or citizen of the country. The explanation was in good time; it entertained the quidnuncs, and saved me from much annoyance afterwards. Before we had finished our parley, however, we were made prisoners by my old friend Dr. Juarros, and taken in triumph to his establishment at the court end of the camp. Here we found most of our fair friends of the balconies, sipping chocolate, in a hurricane of spirits. The "gayeties" of the Paseo were clearly at their height, and the infection was so strong that we at once caught the prevailing feeling, and fell into the popular current. We were speedily informed as to what was "up" for the evening in the fashionable circles. A dance by moonlight on the beach, with other divertisements when that wearied, had already been agreed upon. These were to commence at nine o'clock; it was now only eight, and we devoted the intervening hour to a ramble through the encampments, followed by a train of idlers, who seemed greatly

to relish our interest in its novelties. We found that Chinandega, Chichigalpa, El Viejo, and Pueblo Nuevo, as also Telica and the other small towns on the plain of Leon, were all represented here. The Padres too were in force, and seemed quite as jolly as the secular revellers; in fact, a thorough understanding and tacit admission of equality had put all classes in the best of humors, and they mingled freely, without jostling, conceding to each other their peculiar entertainments, and banishing envy and rivalry from the encampment.

There seemed to be a good deal of practical fun going on, of which we witnessed a number of examples before we had half finished our circuit.

We returned to the court end of the encampment in time to accompany the Señoras along a wide path cleared through the bushes which grow, hedge-like, at the edge of the forest, out upon the broad and beautiful beach. The sand was loose and fine and white near the forest, but towards the water it was hard and smooth. Groups of revellers were scattered along the shore, here a set of dancers, and yonder a crowd of boys engaged in noisy sport, or clustering like bees around some vender of fruits, or of "frescos." There were no doorkeepers or ushers to our moonlit ball-room, and the dancers commenced their movements to the measured beat of the waves of the great ocean, which rolled in grandly at our feet. The dense background of forest, the long line of level shore, the clear moonlight, the gayly-dressed dancers and animated groups, the music, the merriment, and the heaving sea,—I could hardly convince myself of the reality of a scene so unlike anything which we had yet witnessed. In the intervals of the dance, cigars and cigaritas were lighted, and at eleven o'clock, when this amusement wearied, a proposition for "un juego," or play, was carried by acclamation. A large circle was drawn in the sand, around which the participants were seated, one of

each sex alternately. Our host, who, although his head was white, nevertheless retained the spirit and the vivacity of youth, responded to the call for "a boy" to take the centre of the circle and set the "juego" in motion, and was received with uproarious merriment. The play seemed to be very much after the order of those with which children amuse themselves in the United States, and was prefaced by a general collection of handkerchiefs from the entire party, which were bound up in a bundle, and deposited in the centre of the ring. The manager then took one at random, and proceeded to question its owner as to the state of his or her affections, and, from his knowledge of the parties, often putting home questions, which were received with shouts of laughter. Certain standard pains and penalties were attached to failures or hesitations in answering, and when the interrogatives were finished, the respondent was assigned a certain place in the circle, the owner of the second handkerchief taking the next, and so on. Some point was attached to these accidental conjunctions, which I was not shrewd enough to discover, but which was a source of infinite amusement to the spectators, and sometimes of evident annoyance to the "juegadoras." I was pressed into a place in the circle, where my verdancy created most outrageous merriment, in which I joined from sheer force of sympathy; for, like the subjects of jokes in general, I could not for the life of me see "the point of it." I was fortunate, however, in having for my "compañera," the Doña L., one of the most beautiful ladies of Leon, blessed with the smallest and whitest possible feet in the world—for, as the ladies had removed their slippers after the dance, was it not impossible to keep their feet concealed? Her husband had fallen to the lot of a great coquette, to whom the oracle in the centre of the ring declared he legitimately belonged.

By midnight the entertainments began to flag in spirit, and the various groups on the shore to move off in the direction

of the encampment. Our party followed, for as it is a portion of the religion of the Paseo to take a sea-bath before sunrise, the keeping of early hours becomes a necessity. As we passed along the shore, I observed that a number of the visitors had taken up their lodgings in the sand, and they seemed to be so comfortable that I quite envied them their novel repose. Upon reaching what our arch hostess called her "gloriéta," or bower, we found that a narrow sleeping place had been prepared for us within the wicker cage, which, although neat and snug enough, seemed close and uncomfortable, as compared with the open sands. And we quite shocked our friends by announcing, after a brief conference, that we proposed to sleep on the shore—that we had, in fact, come down with the specific, romantic design of passing a night within reach of the spray of the great ocean. So throwing our blankets over our shoulders, we bade the Señoras good night, and started for the beach again. The encampment was now comparatively still; and the hammocks in front of the various impromptu dwellings were all filled with men, each one occupied with his puro, which brightened with every puff, like the lamp of the fire-fly; for the poppy-crowned god of the ancients, in Central America, smokes a cigar. A single full-sized puro does the business for most men, and none but those afflicted with a troubled conscience or the colic, can keep awake beyond the third. The domestics of the various establishments, and the mozos who had no quarters of their own, were reclining wherever it was most convenient, some on mats or blankets, and others on the bare earth, but all, like their betters, puffing silently at their cigars. There were a few lingering groups; here, in a secluded corner, a party yet absorbed in a game of *monté*, and yonder, in the shadow, a pair of lovers, *téte-à-téte*, conversing in whispers lest they should arouse the paternal dragons. Over all, the soldiers of the patrol kept vigilant

watch, slowly pacing, their muskets glancing in the moonlight, from one end of the camp to the other.

The shore was entirely deserted, except by the scattered slumberers. We selected a place at a distance from them all —for there was room enough—and each one scooping a little hollow in the sand, rolled himself in his blanket and deposited himself for the night. The moon was now low in the west, and its light streamed in a glimmering column across the sea, and upon the waves which, crested with silver, broke in a shower of pearly spray within twenty yards of the spot where we were reclining. The cool breeze came in freshly from the water, its low murmur mingling with the briny hiss of the spent waves chafing on the sand, and the hoarse, deep bass of the heavy surf beating impotently on the distant cape. And thus we slept; the naked earth below, the arching heavens above us, and with the great ocean, rolling its unbroken waves over half the globe, to chant our lullaby!

We were up with the earliest dawn, just as the morning began to tint the clouds in the east, and while the retreating squadrons of night hung heavily in the west. The tide was at its ebb, and already little parties were strolling along the beach to catch stray crabs, or fill their pockets with the delicate shells left by the falling sea. We, too, rambled along the shore, to a high projecting ledge of rocks, against which the ocean dashed angrily with an incessant roar. They were covered with the cones of some species of shell fish, which half a dozen Indian boys, armed with hammers, were detaching, to be cooked for their breakfast. There were also hundreds of lively crabs, which scrambled into the crevices, as we leaped from one huge fragment of rock to the other. Beyond this point, and partially shut in by it, was a little bay, of which we at once took possession, and were soon struggling with the combing waves that rolled in majestically on a hard but even floor of white sand, which preserved the

water as pure as in the open sea. Nor was there the treacherous under-tow, dreaded even by the expertest swimmer, and which detracts so much from the pleasure of the ocean bath. But we had not been long in possession of the charming little bay, which we supposed was ours by right of discovery, when we observed small parties of women emerging from the woods, and gathering on the shore. W. had the vanity to believe that they were attracted by the novelty of white skins; but then, if they had simply come to see, why should they so deliberately unrobe themselves? Why, in fact, should they paddle out into the little bay? We modestly retreated into deeper water as they approached; where we were soon completely blockaded, and began to suspect that perhaps we had got into the "wrong pew," and that this nook of water, from its greater safety, had been assigned as a bathing place for the women!—a suspicion which was confirmed by the rapidly increasing numbers which now thronged between us and the shore, and by observing that the male bathers were concentrated at a point some distance to the right. But our embarrassment was quite superfluous; everybody seemed to act on the principle "Honi soit, qui mal y pense;" and when, after remaining in the water for half an hour longer than we would have chosen, we ran the blockade, the movement caused never so much as a flutter amongst the Naiads!

The rules of the Paseo prescribed an hour's bathing in the morning before breakfast, quite as rigidly as do those of Saratoga a bottle of Congress water at the same hour; and when we returned to the camp with our hostess and the set of which she was the patroness, it was with an appetite which would make a dyspeptic die of envy. Coffee, a hot tortilla, and a grilled *perdiz* or partridge, constituted the matutinal meal; after which, and while the sands were yet in the shadow of the forest, a dashing ride on the beach was also prescribed by the immemorial rules of the Paseo. The gaily-

caparisoned horses were brought up by the not less gaily-caparisoned gallants, and the Señoras lifted to their seats in front. Some of them preferred to ride alone; and when all was ready, away they dashed, now coursing along the edge of the forest, and anon skirting the water so closely that the spray, rising beneath the strokes of the rapid hoofs, fell in glittering showers on horse and rider.

At ten o'clock, the force of the sun begins to be felt: a cup of tiste or of chocolate is now in order, followed by a game at cards beneath the arbor-like corridors: and then, when the sun has gained the meridian, a siesta opportunely comes in, with "frescos" and cigars *ad libitum*, to fill up the hours until dinner, a meal which, in common with breakfast and supper, is chiefly made up of fish, freshly caught, and game, filled out with an endless variety of fruits and dulces. Besides visiting, and other devices to kill time, there is always in the afternoon some kind of divertisement, generally impromptu, to occupy the attention until the hour of the evening bath. The afternoon of our visit, the divertisement consisted in a grand search by the police for contraband *aguardiente*, supposed to be concealed in a marsh, just back of the encampment, which resulted in their getting mired and completely bedaubed with mud, before they discovered that they had been adroitly duped by a wag, who the evening preceding had set the whole encampment in an uproar by raising a false alarm of "*los facciosos!*" But this time his luck failed him; he was caught by the indignant soldiers, and, amidst the roars of the entire encampment, was treated to a most effective mud bath, from which he emerged dripping with mire. He was next taken to the sea, and unmercifully ducked, then brought back, tumbled in the marsh again, and, finally left to extricate himself as he best could. He took his punishment like a philosopher, and contrived to get his captors quite as completely in the mud as he was in the mire. This fellow's love for practical jokes, and the ex-

travagant merriment which this rude sport occasioned, illustrate what I before said of the keen appreciation of the ridiculous which pervades all classes in Central America, and which is perhaps due not less to a primitive condition of society, than to that innate comic element which is so inexplicably associated with the gravity of the Spanish character.

It is often the case that the higher officers of state come down to the Paseo. The presence of Gen. Muñoz seemed to be specially desired, as much, I thought, on account of the military band which accompanies him on such occasions, as of his own social qualities. But the affairs of the government were now in an interesting, not to say critical state, in consequence of the threatened revolution in Honduras, and the ladies had to content themselves with the hackneyed, and not over-exhilarating music of the guitar and violin. But they were not the people to permit what the transcendentalists call the "unattainable" to destroy an appreciation and full enjoyment of the "present and actual." On the contrary, they seemed only to regret that the idle, careless life which they now led must terminate with the decline of the moon; a regret, however, wholesomely tempered by the prospect of its renewal during the full moon of April, when it is customary to return again, for a few days, to "wind up the season."

My official duties did not permit of more than one day's absence from the seat of Government, and on the second evening, under most solemn promises of a speedy return and protracted stay, just as the general movement to the beach for the evening dance was commencing, we bade our host good-by, and struck into the road for Leon. A rapid ride of two hours over the open Salines, through forest and jicoral, and our horses clattered over the pavements of Leon to our own silent dwelling. Circumstances prevented my return to the sea; but when the Señoras came back, a week

later, I had full accounts of all that had transpired in the way of match-making or adventure.

It not unfrequently happens that eight or ten thousand persons are collected on the sea-shore, at the height of the Paseo; but of late years the attendance has not been so full as formerly. "You should have seen it thirty years ago," said an ancient lady, with a long-drawn sigh, "when Leon was a rich and populous city; it is nothing now!"

THE TOUCAN.

CHAPTER XXII.

PROPOSED VISIT TO SAN SALVADOR AND HONDURAS—DEPARTURE FROM LEON —CHINANDEGA—LADRONES—THE GOITRE—GIGANTIC FOREST TREES—PORT OF TEMPISQUE—THE ESTERO REAL AND ITS SCENERY—A NOVEL CUSTOM HOUSE AND ITS COMMANDANTE—NIGHT ON THE ESTERO—BAY OF FONSECA —VOLCANO OF COSEGUINA—THE ISLAND OF TIGRE—PORT OF AMAPALA— VIEW FROM THE ISLAND—ENTRANCE TO THE BAY—SACATE GRANDE—EXCITING NEWS FROM HONDURAS—ENGLISH FORTIFICATIONS—EXTENT, RESOURCES, AND IMPORTANCE OF THE BAY—DEPARTURE FOR THE SEAT OF WAR.

I HAD now been nearly a year in Nicaragua, and although repeatedly urged to do so, had not yet found an opportunity of visiting the neighboring States. At this time, however, the condition of public affairs was such as to permit of a brief absence from the capital, and I lost no time in preparing for a journey to Honduras and San Salvador,—States identified with Nicaragua in their general policy, and struggling, in concert with her, to revive the national spirit, and build up again the prostrate fabric of the Republic. This effort, as I have already said, was opposed by the old serviles in the city of Guatemala, and their coadjutors in the other States, who had succeeded in exciting disturbances in Honduras, which threatened the complete overthrow of its Government. Gen. Guardiola, an able but impetuous officer, the head of the army of that State, had been so far deceived and misled by them, as to put himself in arms against the constituted authorities. He had, in fact, obtained possession of the capital, and at the head of a large force was now

marching against Señor Lindo, the President, who had taken up his position and fortified himself at the town of Nacaome, near the Bay of Fonseca. Here he had solicited the intervention of Nicaragua and San Salvador, which States were bound by treaty to sustain Honduras and each other whenever they should be threatened with violence from within or from abroad. San Salvador had accordingly sent a considerable force to the support of Lindo, under the command of Gen. Cabañas, a distinguished officer of the old Republic, and Nicaragua was making preparations to afford further aid in case of necessity.

Under these circumstances, and with the hope of being able to avert a collision, which could only result in evil, I started on my journey. It was at the beginning of the "Semana Santa," or Holy Week, and by the dim, gray light of the morning, as we rode through the silent city, we could make out the arches and evergreen arbors with which the streets were spanned and decorated, preparatory to this principal festival of the calendar. Early morning on the plain of Leon, when the purple volcanoes are relieved against the sun's coronal of gold, and their ragged summits seem crusted over with precious stones, while the broad plain rests in deep shadow, or catches here and there a faint reflection from the clouds,—early morning on the plain of Leon, always beautiful, was never more gorgeous than now. Broad daylight overtook us at the Quebrada of Quesalguaque; and although the dust was deep, for it was now past the middle of the dry season, yet we rode into Chinandega, twenty-five miles, in time for breakfast.

Here I found my old friend Dr. Brown, who had been the first to welcome me at San Juan, and who had just arrived from Panama in the "Gold Hunter," the first American steamer which had ever entered the ancient harbor of Realejo. Here we also found a considerable party of Americans from California, homeward bound, "with pockets full of

rocks," who, taken with the luxuriant climate and country, and oriental habits of the people, had rented a house, purchased horses, and organized an establishment, half harem and half caravansary, where feasting and jollity, Venus and Bacchus, and Mercury and Momus, and half of the rare old rollicking gods, banished from refined circles, not only found sanctuary, but held undisputed sway. They were popular amongst the natives, who thought them "hombres muy vivos," and altogether prime fellows, for they never haggled about prices, but submitted to extortion with a grace worthy of Caballeros with a mint at their command.

The streets near the plaza were blockaded with carts and piles of stones, for the troop of captured ladrones had been put to the useful employment of paving the principal thoroughfares. They were all chained, but in a manner not interfering with their ability to labor, although effectually precluding escape. Yet they were guarded by soldiers, man for man, who lounged lazily in the doorways of the houses on the shaded side of the streets. I observed that most of the criminals were Sambos, mixed Negro and Indian, who seem to combine the vices of both races, with few if any of their good qualities. Yet physically they were both larger and better proportioned than the parent stocks.[1] Their exists between them and the Ladinos, or mixed whites and Indians, a deeply seated hostility, greater than between any of the other castes of the country.

[1] Dr. Von Tschudi makes a similar observation concerning this caste in Peru. He says: "they are the most miserable class of half-castes; with them every vice seems to have attained its utmost development; and it may confidently be said that not one in a thousand of them is a useful member of society, or a good subject of the State. Four-fifths of the criminals in the city jail of Lima are Sambos. Their figures are athletic, and their color black, sometimes tinged with olive-brown. Their noses are not as flat as those of the negroes, but their lips are quite as prominent."—*Travels in Peru*, p. 84.

In Chinandega, as in fact every other town of the State, I observed numerous instances of the *goitre*. It is chiefly, if not wholly, confined to the women. This circumstance particularly attracted my attention, as it is popularly supposed that this is a disease peculiar to elevated or mountainous regions. The inhabited portions of Nicaragua, excepting the sparsely populated districts of Segovia and Chontales, are elevated not exceeding from one to five hundred feet above the sea. Chinandega is only seventy feet, and Leon, Granada, and Rivas, not more than a hundred and fifty feet, above tide water; yet in all these towns the goitre is common. I also saw several cases of *elephantiasis*, but they are rare.

We spent our first night at our old quarters in El Viejo, and started next morning before daylight for what is called "El Puerto de Tempisque," on the Estero Real, where we had engaged a bongo to take us to the Island of Tigre, in the Bay of Fonseca. The distance to Tempisque is about seven leagues; the first three leading through an open, level, and very well cultivated country. That passed, we came to a gigantic forest, including many cedro, cebia,[1] and mahogany trees, amongst which the road wound with labyrinthine intricacy. This forest is partially under the lee of the volcano of Viejo, where showers fall for nearly the whole of the year, and hence the cause of its luxuriance. Here we overtook our patron and his men, marching Indian file, each with a little bag of netting, containing some cheese, plantains, and

[1] The cebia, or wild cotton tree, is one of the most imposing of the forest's monarchs. It grows rapidly, and to a great size. I have seen a single trunk seventy feet long, forty-four feet in circumference at one end, and thirty-seven at the other. The wood is lighter and less durable than pine, but it is worked easily. This tree is generally used for bongos or piraguas. It produces large pods, filled with a downy substance like floss silk, which is used in a variety of ways, for stuffing cushions, pillows, etc. It may, no doubt, be put to other economical purposes.

tortillas for the voyage, thrown over one shoulder, a blanket over the other, and carrying the inseparable machete resting in the hollow of the left arm.

Within a mile or two of Tempisque, the ground began to rise, and we found ourselves on a high, broad ridge of lava, which had ages ago descended from the great volcano above mentioned. It was partially covered with a dry and arid soil, supporting a few coyol palms, some groups of the Agave Americana, and a great variety of cacti, which contrive to flourish where no other plants can grow. The coyol palm is the raggedest of the whole family of palms, yet it is one of the most useful. Its flower is the largest and most magnificent to be found beneath the tropics; it forms a cluster a yard in length and of equal circumference, of the color of frosted gold, flanked and relieved by a deep brown shell or husk, within which it is concealed until it is matured, when it bursts from its prison and shames the day with its glories. The fruit is small, not larger than a walnut, but it is produced in clusters of many hundreds each. The kernels resemble refined wax, and burn almost as readily; when pressed, they yield a fine, clear oil, equal to the best sperm, and well adapted for domestic uses. The shell of the nut is hard, black, and susceptible of the highest polish, and is laboriously carved by the natives into rings and other articles of ornament, which, when set in gold, are very unique and beautiful, and highly valued by strangers. But the uses of this palm do not end here. The heart of the tree is soft, and may be cooked and eaten. And if a hollow or cavity is cut in the trunk, near its top, it soon fills with juice, of a slightly pungent flavor, called *chiche* by the Indians, which is a delicious and healthful, and when allowed to ferment, an intoxicating beverage.

From the summit of the lava ridge, we obtained a view of the level alluvions bordering the Bay of Fonseca. They are covered with an unbroken forest, and the weary eye

traverses a motionless ocean of verdure, tree-tops on tree-tops, in apparently unending succession.

We paused for a moment to contemplate the scene; but its vastness and silence were painful, and I felt relieved, when, after descending rapidly for ten minutes, we found ourselves amidst some evidences of life, at the "Puerto de Tempisque." These evidences consisted of a single shed, open upon three sides, and inhabited by an exceedingly ill-looking mestizo, an old crone, and an Indian girl, naked to the waist, whose occupation extended to bringing water, and grinding maize for tortillas. There was a fine spring at the base of the hill near by, and around it were some groups of sailors, engaged in cooking their breakfast. The ground back of the hut was elevated and dry, but immediately in front commenced the mangrove swamps. Here too, scooped in the mud, was a small shallow basin, and extending from it into the depths of the swamp, a narrow canal, four or five feet deep, and six or eight in breadth, communicating with the Estero Real. The tide was out, and the slimy bottom of both basin and canal, in which some ugly bongos were lying, was exposed and festering in the sun. Altogether it was a forbidding place, suggestive of agues and musquitos. Ben prepared breakfast, and meantime I amused myself with a tame *coati* or tropical raccoon, which I found beneath the shed, and which was as frolicksome and malicious as a kitten. Its principal delight seemed to be to bite the toes of the Indian girl, who evidently owed it no good will, and was only prevented from doing it a damage, by the old crone, whose pet it was.

In the course of a couple of hours the tide began to rise; our bongo was loaded, and by eleven o'clock, we were pushing slowly through the narrow canal. After penetrating about three hundred yards, we entered an arm of the Estero. It was wider than the canal, and permitted the use of oars. All around us, so dense that not a ray of the sun could penetrate, was a forest of mangroves. These trees cover the low

alluvions of the coast, which are overflowed by the tide, to the entire exclusion of all other vegetation. Their trunks commence at the height of eight or ten feet from the ground, and are supported by naked roots shooting downward and outward, like the legs of a tripod, hundreds in number, and those of one tree interlocking with those of another, so as to constitute an impenetrable thicket. Bare, slimy earth, a gray wilderness of roots surmounted by tall spire-like trunks, enveloped in a dense robe of opaque, green leaves, with no signs of life except croaking water-fowls and muddy crabs clinging to the roots of the trees, an atmosphere saturated with damps, and loaded with an odor of seething mire—these are the predominating features of a mangrove swamp! I never before comprehended fully the aspects of nature, described to us by geologists, at the period of the coal formations,—"when rivers swollen with floods, and surcharged with detritus, heaved mournfully through the silence of primeval forests; when endless fens existed, where the children of nature stood in ranks so close and impenetrable, that no bird could pierce the net-work of their branches, nor reptile move through the stockade of their trunks; when neither bird nor quadruped had yet started into being." Half an hour carried us through these Stygian solitudes; and I breathed freer, when our boat pushed into the broad and magnificent Estero Real. This is an arm of the sea, projecting from the lower extremity of the Bay of Fonseca, for a distance of sixty miles, behind the volcanic range of the Marabios, in the direction of Lake Managua. Where we entered, about thirty miles above its mouth, it was three hundred yards wide, and forty-eight feet, or eight fathoms, deep. The tide, which here rises about ten feet, had just turned, and we floated down rapidly, with the current. The banks were now full; the water washed the feet of the mangroves, and they appeared as if rising from the sea. Being all of about equal height, and their foliage compact and

heavy, they shut in the Estero as with walls of emerald. The great volcano of El Viejo, its dark brown summit traced boldly against the sky, came into view, sole monarch of the scene, now on one side, now on the other, as we followed the windings of the stream. Though the elements of the scenery were not many, yet the atmospheric effects, the long, dreamy vistas, and the dark, leafy arches, bending over some narrow arm of the Estero, left an impression upon my memory, in many respects as pleasing, and in all as ineffaceable, as the richer and more varied scenery around the great lakes of the interior.

As we proceeded, and the tide fell, the steep, slimy banks, before concealed by the water, began to come in view. Seen from the middle of the Estero, they appeared of a rich umber color, contrasting strongly with the light blue of the water and the dense green of the trees. Life now began to animate the hitherto silent banks; for thousands of water-fowls, before concealed in the leafy coverts, emerged to prey upon laggard snails, and to snap up presumptuous crabs, induced by the sunshine and the slime to linger on the shore, when they should have been "full fathoms five" beneath the water. Amongst these birds I then noticed some white and rose-colored herons, of exceeding beauty. Many of the latter are to be seen on the shores of Lake Nicaragua, in the vicinity of the Estero of Panaloya.

At five o'clock, during the last hour of the ebb, we observed that the left bank of the Estero was higher than the other, and that the stream had now widened to upwards of half a mile, and had deepened to ten fathoms. It is here called "Playa Grande," and here the Government maintains a kind

of Custom House. When we came in sight of the establishment, our sailors took to their oars, and pulled towards the shore. If Tempisque was solitary, this was utterly desolate. The trees had been cleared away, for a few hundred feet, and in the midst of the open space stood two thatched sheds, elevated on posts, so that the floors were eight or ten feet above the mud, which was now partially dried, cracked, and covered with leprous spots of salt, left from the water of the overflows. To reach these structures, a tree had been cut so as to fall down the bank; this was notched on the upper surface, and stakes had been driven at the sides, to prevent whoever should attempt to pass from slipping off into the mire. As we approached, the Nicaraguan flag was displayed, and the half-dozen soldiers comprising the guard were drawn up on the platform of the first hut. They presented arms, and went through other formalities, in obedience to the Commandante's emphatic orders, with a gravity which, considering the place and the circumstances, was sufficiently comical. The Commandante assisted me up the slimy log, and upon the platform of the Custom House, and gave me a seat in a hammock. Beneath the roof were several coffin-like shelves, shut in closely by curtains of cotton cloth, and reached by pegs driven in the posts of the edifice. These were dormitories or sleeping places, thus fortified against the musquitos. From the roof depended quantities of *plantains*, *maduras*, and *verdes*, intermixed with festoons of *tasajo* or hung-beef. A large box filled with sand, at one end of the platform, was the fire-place, and around it were a couple of old women engaged in grinding corn for tortillas. The Commandante smiled at my evident surprise, and asked if we had anything quite equal to this, in the way of customs establishments, in the United States? It was a delightful place, he added, for meditation; and a good one withal for young officers lavish of their pay, for here they couldn't spend a quartillo of it.

He had held the place for three months; but the Government was merciful, and never inflicted it upon one man for more than six, unless he had specially excited its displeasure. "In fact," continued the Commandante, "my devotion to the women is the cause of my banishment; not that I was more open or immoderate in my amours than others, but because my superior was my rival!" And the Commandante made a facetious allusion to King David, and the bad example he had set to persons in authority. After this I might have left the Commandante with an impression that, whatever his past delinquencies, he was now a correct and proper young man. But just at that moment the curtains of one of the dormitories, which I had observed was occupied, were pushed apart, and a pair of satin slippers, and eke a pair of tiny feet were projected, followed in due course by the whole figure of a yellow girl, of more than ordinary pretensions to beauty, dressed in the height of Nicaraguan fashion. I comprehended at once that she had fled to the dormitory, upon our approach, to make her toilette; and when the Commandante introduced me to her as his *sobrina*, niece, I only ejaculated, *picaro!* rascal!

There was little to interest us at this desolate place, and although the Commandante urged us to stay to dinner, it was of more consequence to avail ourselves of the ebb tide than to eat; so the six soldiers were paraded again, and we pushed off, and fell down the stream. As we rounded the first bend, we discovered several large boats, fastened to the shore, and waiting for the turn of the tide, to ascend the stream—for the current in the channel is so strong as to render it impossible to row against it. Consequently all navigation is governed by the rise and fall of the tide. The boats were filled with men, women, and children, flying from the seat of war in Honduras. They gave us a confused account of the advance of Gen. Guardiola to the coast, and said that there had

been a battle, in which the Government had been beaten, with a variety of other startling rumors, which turned out to be unfounded.

At six o'clock it was slack water, and our men pulled for awhile at the oars. But the moment the flow commenced, they pushed in at a place where a little cleared spot, and some grass, showed that there was an elevation of the shore, and made fast to the roots of the overhanging mangroves. The banks were very abrupt, and covered with little soldier crabs, which paraded beneath the trees, and scrambled along their roots in thousands. Some of the men stripped, dragged themselves up the slimy banks, and with some wood, which they had brought, made a fire. For our own part, we essayed to fish; but did not get even the poor encouragement of a nibble. Yet there were abundance of fishes, of a peculiar kind, all around us. They were called "anteojos," or spy-glasses, by the sailors, from their goggle eyes, which, placed at the top of their heads, project above the water, like so many bubbles. They were from six inches to a foot long, with bodies of a muddy, yellow color, and went in shoals. When frightened, they would dart off, fairly leaping out of the water, making a noise like a discharge of buck-shot skipping past. They were impudent fishes, and gathered round the boat, with their staring eyes, while we were fishing, with an expression equivalent to "what gringos!"

Our boat rose with the tide, and when it got within reach of the overhanging branches, we clambered ashore. We found that here was an open, sandy space, a hundred feet square, covered with traces of fires, and with oyster and muscle shells,—evidences that it was a favorite stopping-place with the marineros. The sun had so far declined as to throw the whole Estero in the shade, while the light still glowed on the opposite leafy shores. Altogether I was taken with the scene, and sipped my claret amidst the swarthy sailors with a genuine Robinson Crusoeish feeling. As night

came on, we pushed out into the Estero, to avoid the musquitos, and cast our anchor (a big stone) in eleven fathoms water.

The moon was past her first quarter, and the night was one of the loveliest. The silence was unbroken, except by the sound of the distant surf, brought to us by the sea breeze, and by an occasional, sullen plunge, as of an alligator. I have said that at this season, when the grass on the hills, with the ephemeral vegetation generally, is dried up, nearly the whole country is burnt over. The forests through which we had ridden that morning had been traversed by fiery columns. And now, as it grew dark, we could see them slowly advancing up the sides of the great volcano. At midnight they had reached its summit, and spreading laterally, presented the appearance of a flaming triangle, traced against the sky. So must the volcano have appeared in that remote period when the molten lava flowed down its steep sides, and devastated the plain at its base.

During the night, when the tide turned, the patron lifted anchor, and floated down with the current. The proceeding did not disturb my slumbers, and when I woke next morning, we were in the midst of the Bay of Fonseca, with a fair wind and all sails set, steering for the island of Tigre, which lifted its high, dim cone immediately in front. Upon our right, distant, but distinct beneath the morning light, was the low, ragged volcano of Coseguina, whose terrible eruption in 1838 I have already described. Other volcanoes and volcanic peaks defined the outlines of this glorious Bay; and the porpoises tumbling around us, and gulls poising in the air, or slowly flapping their crescent wings just above the deep green waves, all reminded us that we were near the great ocean. We went through the water with great velocity, and at eleven o'clock, when the breeze began to decline, we were within five or six miles of the island, which now presented a most magnificent appearance. It is about thirty

miles in circumference, with sloping shores; but immediately in the centre rises a regular, conical, volcanic mountain, between four and five thousand feet high, clothed almost to the summit with a robe of trees. The top, however, is bare, and apparently covered with burnt earth, of a rich brown color.

VOLCANO OF COSEGUINA.

At noon, the wind having entirely died away, the men took to their oars, and we coasted for upwards of two hours along the base of the island, before reaching the Port of Amapala, which is situated upon its northern side. In places the shore was projecting and abrupt, piled high with rocks of lava, black and forbidding, upon which the sea-birds perched in hundreds; elsewhere it receded, forming quiet little bays, with broad sandy beaches, and a dense background of trees. We finally came to what seemed to be the entrance of a narrow valley, where the forest had been partially removed. Here we saw the thatched roofs of embowered huts, with cattle grazing around them; and shortly after, turning round an abrupt lava promontory, where, upon a

huge rock, the English had painted the flag of their country, in evidence of having taken possession of the island "in the name of Her Majesty, Victoria the First,"—we darted into the little bay of Amapala.

Two brigs, one Dutch, and the other American under the Chilian flag, were lying in the harbor, which was still and smooth as a mirror, bending with a crescent sweep into the land, with a high promontory on either side, but with a broad, clear beach in front, upon which were drawn up a great variety of bongos and canoes, including one or two trim little schooners. In a row, following the curve of the shore, were the huts of the inhabitants, built of canes, and thatched in the usual manner. Back of these the ground rose gently, forming a broad ridge, and over all towered the volcano of El Tigre. The most conspicuous features of the village were two immense warehouses, belonging to Don Carlos Dardano, an Italian merchant, whose enterprise had given importance to the place. Through his influence the State of Honduras, to which the island belongs, had constituted it a Free Port, and made a concession of a certain quantity of land to every family which should establish itself there. As a consequence, within two or three years, from a temporary stopping-place for fishermen, Amapala had come to possess a considerable and constantly increasing population and trade, and now bade fair to rival La Union, the only port of San Salvador on the Bay of Fonseca.

We landed immediately in front of the principal warehouse, which was now closed, by a decree of the authorities against Don Carlos, who had been weak enough to accept the office of "Superintendent of the Island of Tigre," during the temporary English occupation, and who had been obliged to retire into San Salvador, when it was evacuated. We found one of his agents, however, a German, who, with his family, lived in the smaller building, eating and sleeping amongst great heaps of hides, and piles of indigo and tobacco

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bales, bags of Chilian flour, and boxes of merchandise. He appeared to be a civil, well educated man, but wore his shirt outside of his pantaloons, and altogether conformed to the habits of the people around him.

The Commandante of the port had withdrawn the principal part of the garrison, and joined the forces of the Government at Nacaome. His lieutenant, nevertheless, "put himself at my disposition," in the most approved style; but I made no demand upon his courtesies, except for a guide to lead us to the top of the hill overlooking the port. A scramble of half an hour brought us to the spot. It was cleared, and commanded a most extensive view of the Bay and its islands and distant shores. At our feet, upon one hand, were the town and harbor, with a broad sweep of tree-tops intervening; and on the other, a wide savanna, forming a gigantic amphitheatre, in which were gardens of unbounded luxuriance. But these only constituted the foreground of the magnificent panorama which was spread out before us, and which combined all the elements of the grand and beautiful. A small portion of the view, the entrance to the Bay from the ocean, is presented in the frontispiece to the first volume of this work. Upon one side is the volcano of Coseguina, rough and angular, and upon the other that of Conchagua, distinguished for its regular proportions and sweeping outlines. They are stupendous landmarks, planted by nature to direct the mariner to the great and secure haven at their base. Between them are the high islands of Conchaguita and Mianguera, breaking the swell of the sea, and dividing the entrance into three broad channels, through each of which the largest vessels may pass with ease. All of these entrances, as shown by the map, are commanded by the Tigre; and it is this circumstance, joined to its capabilities for easy defence, which gives the island much of its importance.

The view to the north takes in the islands of Martin Pe-

rez, Posesion, and Punta de Sacate, belonging to San Salvador; and Sacate Grande, belonging to Honduras. These had all been seized by the English at the time of their piratical descent on the Tigre. Sacate Grande is the largest, and, in common with the rest, is of volcanic origin. It is rough and fantastic in outline, and almost entirely destitute of forest trees. The scoriaceous hills support only *sacate*, or grass, which, during the dry season, becomes yellow, and gives the island the appearance of being covered with ripe and golden grain.

But beyond the islands, which Mr. Stephens has observed surpass those of the Grecian Archipelago in beauty, is a belt of mountains on the main-land, relieved by the volcanoes of San Miguel and Guanacaure, and numerous other tall but nameless peaks. I spent an hour on the hill in mapping the Bay and taking the bearings of the principal landmarks, and at four o'clock returned to the port, hungry, but too much excited by the scene to feel wearied. Here I found an officer of the Government of Honduras, who had come down to procure additional supplies for the army. He gave me the startling news that Gen. Guardiola, at the head of three thousand men, was only one day's march from Nacaome, and that a battle might now be hourly expected. I had intended to spend the night on the island; but this news, joined to the solicitations of the officer himself, determined me to proceed at once to San Lorenzo, on the main-land, and thence, next morning, to Nacaome. But our bongo was high and dry on the beach, and we had to wait for the rising of the tide in order to get her off. Meantime we dined, and strolled along the shore to a little headland, which the English, during their stay, had attempted to fortify. They had constructed a kind of stockade, surrounded by a ditch, with embrasures for artillery, and loopholes for musketry. But in order to save labor, and yet to frighten off assailants, a considerable part of the enclosure was built of a kind of

wicker-work of canes, plastered on the outside with mud. It was pierced for guns also, and looked as formidable as some of the pasteboard forts of the Chinese, from whom the suggestion seems to have been derived. The enclosure was now used as a pen for some sheep, which the agent of Don Carlos had recently introduced on the island. I hope this fact will afford some consolation to the builders; it must be gratifying to them to know that their labors have not been wholly lost![1]

The Bay of Fonseca probably constitutes the finest harbor on the Pacific. In its capacities it is said to surpass its only rival, the Bay of San Francisco, which it much resembles in form. Its entire length, within the land, is about eighty miles, by from thirty to thirty-five in breadth. The three States of Honduras, San Salvador, and Nicaragua, have ports upon it. The principal port is that of La Union, situated on the subordinate bay of the same name, and belonging to San Salvador. The inner shores are low, but with a country back of them of unbounded fertility, penetrated by several considerable streams, some of which may be navigated. The mountains which separate it from the sea are high, and effectually protect it from the winds and storms. It has, in nearly every part, an abundance of water for the largest

[1] Had I not determined to exclude from my Narrative any extended allusion to political affairs with which I was in any way connected, this would be a proper place to present a true statement of the circumstances of the seizure of this island and Bay by the officers of Great Britain. These circumstances have been grossly misrepresented; and a British Envoy has gone to the extent of asserting, not only that the outrage was "provoked" by circumstances which transpired *after the act was committed*, and with which the perpetrators were wholly unacquainted, but also to admit, in his correspondence with a confederate, that this assertion was made with a full knowledge of its falsity, and for the purpose of shielding that confederate from odium, by shifting it to innocent shoulders! Should self-justification seem to require it, a succinct account of that seizure may be given in the Appendix to this volume.

ships, which, in the little bay of Amapala, may lie within a cable-length of the shore. The entrance may be effected with any wind, and the exit can always be made with the tide. Fresh water may be obtained in abundance on the islands and along the shores; the climate is delicious and healthy; the surrounding mountains furnish timber of superior quality, including pine, for ship building and repairs; in short, nature has here lavished every requisite to make the Bay of Fonseca the great naval centre of the globe. But what gives peculiar importance to it, and lends significance to the attempted seizure by Great Britain, is the fact that, if a ship canal is ever opened across the Continent, it seems more than probable that its western terminus must be, *via* the Estero Real, in this Bay. The evidence in support of this opinion will appear in another connection.

The islands in the Bay are of great beauty. Several of them had anciently a large population of Indians. In Dampier's time there were two considerable Indian towns on the island of Tigre, and one on Mianguera. But the natives were so much oppressed by the pirates who made this Bay their principal station on the South Sea, that they fled to the main-land, and have never returned. Drake had his head-quarters on the island of Tigre, during his operations in the Pacific, and, under one pretext or another, it has been much frequented by British national vessels for many years. Its importance, in a naval point of view, is well understood by the Admiralty, under whose orders it was carefully surveyed by Capt. Belcher, R. N., in 1839. No American war vessel, it is probably unnecessary to add, has ever entered the waters of this Bay, although it is clear, to the narrowest comprehension, that it completely commands the whole coast from Panama to San Diego, and in the hands of any maritime nation, must control the transit across either isthmus, and with it the commerce of the world.

CHAPTER XXIII.

DEPARTURE FOR SAN LORENZO—MORNING SCENES—NOVEL CAVALCADE—A HIGH PLAIN—LIFE AMONGST REVOLUTIONS—NACAOME—MILITARY RECEPTION—GEN. CABANAS—AN ALARM—NEGOTIATIONS—BRITISH INTERFERENCE—A TRUCE—PROSPECTS OF ADJUSTMENT—AN EVENING REVIEW—THE SOLDIERY—A NIGHT RIDE—RETURN TO SAN LORENZO.

A LITTLE before sunset, the tide had lifted our boat, and the wind being brisk and fair, we embarked for San Lorenzo. Our course was along the base of Sacate Grande. The vaqueros had set fire to the dry grass that afternoon, and when the night fell, it revealed a broad sheet of flame, extending entirely across the island, sending up vast billows of black smoke, and moving onward with a deep and steady roar, like that of the ocean. Spires of flame, like flashes of lightning, often darted upward amongst these clouds of smoke, or swooping downward, set fire to the grass in advance of the devouring column. The spectacle was grand, and I watched it until midnight, and then crept beneath the chopa and went to sleep.

I was awakened by a sense of suffocation, and found that it had rained during the night, and that the sailors had let down the flaps of the chopa, thus confining us in a low and narrow space, not much larger than an ordinary oven. I hastened to drag myself out upon the pineta. Day was just breaking, and a hot, gray mist hung around us, half concealing yet magnifying every object. I could only make out that the bongo was lying high up on a broad, black beach, fifty yards from a sullen looking river, whose opposite shore

was overhung with drooping trees. The sailors were all gone, and I was perfectly ignorant of our position. I felt oppressed by a lassitude such as I had never before experienced, and longed for water, if only to wash my hands and face. The river was dark and sullen, yet it appeared as if it might refresh me. So I got over the side of the boat, but sunk at once to the instep in a black, sickening mire. I nevertheless advanced towards the water's edge, and had nearly reached it, when I discovered a number of large alligators, trailing their ugly carcasses through the mud, not ten feet distant. In the deceptive light they looked absolutely monstrous. I did not stop to take a second view, but retreated to the bongo with a rapidity which five minutes before I would have thought impossible. Here I roused Ben, and then commenced hallooing for our patron. Directly we heard his voice in the distance, and soon after he came stalking towards us, appearing through the mist like one of the genii of Arabian story.

It turned out that we were about three leagues up an estero formed by the river Nacaome, and within six leagues of the town of the same name, whither we were bound. A short distance in advance, and to the right of us, the patron said there were some cattle ranchos, whither he had gone with the officer who had accompanied us, to obtain horses for our expedition. I inquired with what luck, and received the expected answer, "no hay!" accompanied with the usual expressive wave of the forefinger. It was certainly a comfortable prospect, stuck there in the mud, amidst mists, and deadly damps, and alligators. My previous sense of exhaustion rapidly gave place to a vague feeling of injury and general discontent and disgust. Determined to know the worst, I ordered the patron to lead me to the ranchos. They were miserable huts, hastily constructed of bushes and palm-leaves, surrounded by a drove of melancholy cows, which some fever-and-agueish looking women were engaged in

milking. A brawny mestizo, with a deep scar across his face, sat by a little fire, turning some pieces of meat on the coals; and a pack of mangy dogs, showing their long, white teeth, sneaked snarling around our legs. I bade the brawny mestizo good morning; he looked up with a furtive, suspicious glance, but made no reply. How far all these circumstances contributed to restore good humor, the reader can readily imagine. My first impulse was to shoot a dog or two, and their owner in the bargain, if he made any disturbance in consequence, but thought better of it, and sat down gloomily in a damp hammock which I found strung between the trees.

Shortly after, my companions came up from the bongo, and the mist lifting, and matters generally assuming a more cheerful aspect, we took possession of the mestizo's fire, and began to prepare breakfast. A few conciliatory reals set the women to grinding tortillas for us, and really made the mestizo himself complacent,—at any rate, he exhibited some grim signs of gratitude by kicking his curs from around our legs.

We had hardly finished our breakfast, when our friend, the officer, returned, accompanied by some Indians, one of whom was an alcalde, each leading a couple of horses. Such horses! They were "caballos del campo," rough beasts from the ranchos, long ago mortgaged to the buzzards. We had fortunately brought our saddles with us, and were not long in getting mounted, and on our road—if the bed of the river can be called a road. It was a cavalcade worthy of Hogarth's pencil, and each horseman laughed inordinately, at the comical figure cut by his companions. At the head of the party rode our Indian alcalde, with the air of a man discharging an exalted and responsible duty. He had heard of "El Norte," but had no clear notions of its whereabouts; he couldn't tell whether it was northward or southward, but knew that it was "muy poderoso," very powerful, and had

vessels of war, and a great many cannons. He led us up the stream to a ford, crossing which, we struck into a broad path connecting with the camino real to Nacaome. The vegetation in the river valley was very luxuriant, affording food for many droves of cattle, which, at the height of the dry season, are driven down from the elevated, parched savannas of the interior to browse here. This practice accounted for the number of temporary huts which we passed in our march, and which were only built to last a month or two, while the cattle remained in the valley.

The alcalde took us out of our way to his own house, which was a rude but permanent establishment, where he insisted on our stopping long enough to drink a calabash of milk; I obliged him by dismounting and entering for a moment. The women were engaged in their eternal occupation of grinding tortillas, and, instead of rising to welcome us, bashfully continued their work. They were apparently pure Indians, but of a lighter shade than those of Nicaragua. They belong to a nation denominated Cholutecan, which is evidently a Mexican name, and probably the same with Cholultecan, i. e., people of Cholula, the place of the great teocalli or pyramid. A short distance beyond the alcalde's house, we reached a broad plain, covered only with clumps of gum arabic bushes, interspersed with calabash trees. These did not particularly obstruct the view, and as the plain was high, we could overlook the country for a great distance around. Behind us was a wide expanse of low alluvial land, densely wooded, with the high islands of the Gulf distinctly visible beyond; while in front rose a series of ragged, blue mountains, the outliers of the great central plateau of Honduras. As we advanced, the plain became more open, but strangely traversed, at intervals, by narrow strips of lava, projecting only a few feet above the ground. Finally the bushes disappeared altogether, and the plain assumed the character of an undulating savanna. And now, looking like some old

fortress, we discovered, a long way in advance, the low, straggling buildings of a hacienda, from which radiated lines of stone walls, the first we had seen in Central America. It was a grateful sight, and inspired our Rozinantes to such a degree, that, by a liberal application of whip and spur, they were actually seduced into a gallop—which they kept up in a paroxysmal way, until we reached the hacienda. In the laughter created by this race, we had not observed the commotion which our approach had excited. We were at first mistaken for a party of mounted ladrones; but as soon as we were distinctly made out, all alarm subsided, and the proprietor of the estate, a tall, courteous man, advanced to welcome us. Dismounting, we left our blown horses with the mozos, under the broad corridor, and entered the house. One half of the grand sala was filled with tobacco in bales, from the plains of Santa Rosa, in the interior, on its way to El Tigre, to be shipped, via Cape Horn, for Holland!

We had not been long seated, before a young lady of great intelligence of face, grace, and benignity of manner, and dressed in American style, entered the room. The proprietor introduced her as his daughter, who, in consequence of her mother's death, was now his housekeeper. She conversed with us readily, and I soon discovered that she had been well educated, and had travelled with her father both in the United States and in Europe.

The conversation turned upon the present political disturbances, and we learned that General Guardiola, the night previously, had reached the village of Pespire, only two leagues from Nacaome, and that probably he would attack the place that very day. In fact, our host told me his valuables were already packed, and his horses saddled for flight into San Salvador, the moment the sound of guns should announce that all negotiations and attempts at compromise had failed. But I asked, if you leave, what will become of your property here? "It will be robbed," was the prompt

reply, "but not for the first time; the estate has been three times pillaged within the past six years!"

I shuddered to think what might be the fate of the gentle girl before us, if, when the worst came to the worst, her father's plans of escape should fail him. She said she only wished that matters would take some decisive turn: the sternest reality were better than this painful suspense. She did not care for herself, (and she pointed significantly to the hilt of a poignard concealed in her belt,) she had little to choose between life and death, except for the sake of her father and her motherless sisters.

It was yet two leagues to Nacaome, and knowing the reputation of General Guardiola for impetuosity, I felt that the object of my visit could only be accomplished, if at all, by reaching the scene of action before any collision should take place. Our host was positive that the day would not pass without a battle. We accordingly mounted, and advanced as rapidly as our miserable horses enabled us. A little distance beyond the hacienda, the road struck again into the narrow valley of the river; and as we were now beyond the alluvions, and entering the mountains, it assumed all the appearance of a mountain stream. In fact, the whole scenery had changed, and was unlike that of any part of the country we had yet seen. The stones around us were rich in copper, and interspersed with quartz, and the granite outcrops here and there showed that we had reached the region of primitive rocks. The mountains were no longer isolated peaks, but took the form of continuous ranges, and made broad sweeps in the distance. The river too, here murmuring amongst the stones, there spreading out in broad, dark pools, reminded us of the upper tributaries of the Hudson.

We passed several houses, occupied only by women; the men had either joined the army, or had fled to the hills to escape the conscription. About a league from the hacienda, we met a man, splendidly mounted, with long hair, and a

wild, bandit contour generally, who was riding express to the Port of La Union, with despatches from the commander of the San Salvadorean allies in Nacaome. He was known to some of our party as "Diablo Negro," Black Devil, and

MOUNTAIN SCENERY IN HONDURAS.

had a twin brother who rejoiced under the hardly less objectionable designation of "Diablo Blanco," White Devil. These twin devils were noted in the country as men of unbounded activity and daring, and their titles were intended to be complimentary. Diablo Negro told us that an Indian runner, despatched by our official friend, had reached Nacaome before he had left,—and that the army was ready to receive us upon one side, and Guardiola on the other. And then he laughed outright at his own observation, which he

evidently thought was witty. The rebels, he said, were advancing, and if we rode fast we might witness an "escaramuza," or scrimmage, such as it would do our souls good to see; and with a wild laugh, Diablo Negro struck spurs into his horse, and dashed off for La Union.

The valley widened as we progressed, and soon a grand amphitheatre, encircled by hills, opened before us. Upon an eminence in the centre stood the town of Nacaome, the white walls of its houses and the stuccoed tower of its principal church looking like silver beneath the noonday sun. A single glance revealed to us the capabilities of the position for defence, and explained why it had been chosen as a final stand point by the Government. We could distinctly see that the roof of the church was covered with soldiers, and martial music reached our ears, subdued by distance, but yet having a wonderfully earnest and ominous sound. Our official friend, who was in advance, stopped for a moment and listened with an attentive but troubled air, and then rejoining us, begged that we would move on slowly, and allow him to ride ahead and ascertain what was the cause of the peculiar activity of the garrison. I could see that he thought Guardiola was about making an attack, and was anxious not to involve us in the confusion, not to say danger, of a battle. We agreed to await his return in a little hollow, a short distance in advance. He thanked us, and galloped towards the town. Matters now appeared coming to a crisis, but we had gone too far to think of receding; besides, our horses were used up, and would make a sorry show with Guardiola's lancers at their heels! Our Nicaragua servants were pale and silent, and I vainly attempted to rally them into good spirits. It was all very well for us to be merry, they said; we were in no danger; but Guardiola would make no ceremony with them, and the spokesman shuddered as he drew his hand across his throat, by way of

commentary on his own observations. They seemed somewhat re-assured when Ben unfolded our flag, but yet kept religiously in the rear, ready to run at the first appearance of danger.

We waited in the hot sun for our official friend to return, until we were tired, and then moved on again towards the town. No sooner had we emerged from the hollow, however, than we encountered a large cavalcade of officers, full uniformed and mounted on splendid horses. Amongst them was a plainly dressed, unpretending man, to whom we were introduced as Señor Lindo, President of Honduras. He was of middle age, but looked care-worn and prematurely old. With him was Gen. Cabañas, and a large proportion of that devoted band of officers associated with Gen. Morazan in his last gallant, but unsuccessful, struggle to preserve the old Federation. I had heard much of Gen. Cabañas, his generosity, bravery, and humanity, and observed him with deep interest. He is a small, pale man, forty-five or fifty years of age, with a singularly mild face, and gentle, almost womanly, manners. Yet beneath that unassuming, retiring exterior, there slumbers a spirit which no disaster can depress, nor opposition subdue. For fifteen years he has been conspicuous in the political affairs of the country; yet his deadliest foes cannot point to a single one of his acts during that long, anarchical period, tainted with selfishness, or influenced by hatred or revenge. I could not help thinking that, in more favored lands, and other fields of action, his noble qualities might have won for him a name distinguished amongst those whom the world delights to honor.

Gen. Cabañas was now in command of the San Salvadorean allies, and had under him, as aid, the sole surviving son of his benefactor and friend, Morazan. He was a handsome youth, of noble bearing, and a frank, open expression of face,—a perfect type, it is said, of his father. He spoke English fluently, and at once explained to us the posture of

affairs. Guardiola's advance was already within sight, and a detachment had been thrown forward to meet them, under command of Gen. Barrios. It was this movement which had attracted our attention, and alarmed our conductor.

A short ride brought us to the suburbs of the town. The huts were all closed and deserted. Those within musket-shot of the plaza had their walls for several feet above the ground knocked away, so as to prevent their use by assailants for purposes of protection or concealment. The plaza itself was barricaded, with embrasures for cannon, which were so stationed as to sweep the streets leading to it. The sole entrance was by a covered way, so narrow as to admit the passage of but a single horseman at a time. The troops were all under arms, and the defences were fully manned, but by as motley an array of soldiers as it is possible to conceive. They received us, nevertheless, with prolonged vivas, and altogether seemed to be in high spirits. There was a kind of pleasurable excitement in the mere presence of danger, in which I must own I could not resist sympathizing.

We dismounted, and were ushered into the sala of a large house, fronting the church, and which had evidently belonged to a family of some wealth. But it was deserted, and destitute of furniture, excepting some tables and chairs, and one or two other articles, too heavy to be removed with ease.

We had hardly got seated, and the usual formulas of an official reception were not yet concluded, when a gun was fired on the opposite side of the plaza, followed by the rapid beat of a drum, and the cry of "to arms! to arms!" We started to our feet simultaneously, and the next instant an officer entered and announced that a party of Guardiola's horse had eluded the scouts, and had already entered the town. Señor Lindo hurriedly bade us be under no alarm, begged us to excuse him for an instant, and in less time than I am writing it, we were left wholly alone. A moment after-

wards, we heard the clear, firm voice of Gen. Cabañas, and going to the door, I saw him mounted on his horse in the centre of the plaza, giving his orders coolly and deliberately, as if engaged in a review. The men stood at the barricades three deep; the matches of the gunners were lighted; and an attacking party was sallying rapidly by the only gate, to cut off the assailants. Having been accustomed to regard a Central American army of new levies as little better than a mob, I was surprised to see the order, rapidity, and alacrity with which every movement was conducted, and was rather anxious, on the whole, to know how the motley fellows would fight, if driven to extremity. But it was soon apparent that we were not to be favored just then with anything beyond the excitement of preparation. For while we were helping ourselves to the contents of a box of claret and some bread and cheese, which the President, notwithstanding the bustle, had found time to send us, wondering why the performance did not commence, and speculating on the probable result, if Guardiola had really eluded the advance, and surprised the town—a young officer presented himself, bearing Gen. Cabañas's compliments, and the information that the alarm had been occasioned by a petty detachment of lancers, who had entered the surburbs in mere bravado; that half of them had been captured on the spot, and that the rest were in full retreat, with a troop of the Government cavalry close at their heels.

Not long after, the President and his Secretary returned, and I learned that Commissioners had already been sent to Guardiola, with a view of disabusing him of certain errors into which he had fallen, and procuring his peaceable submission to the Government. The intervention of San Salvador, and if necessary of Nicaragua also, the President thought, would materially influence the conduct of the refractory General; but he feared, after all, that evil influences and counsels might prevail. It was clear that Guardiola had

been imposed upon by the Serviles of Guatemala, and without being conscious of it, was in fact made use of by them, and their foreign coadjutors, to prevent Honduras from entering into the proposed new confederation. Señor Lindo showed me a letter from a man named Pavon, Secretary to the British Charge d'Affaires, Mr. Chatfield, addressed to a confederate, then under arrest for treason, in which the whole plot of the Servile faction was unfolded. This letter had been entrusted to Admiral Hornby, commander of the British naval force in the Pacific, now on board the Asia, eighty-four, in the Port of La Union, and by him had been inadvertently sent to the Government. Mr. Pavon congratulated his friend that matters were taking a decided turn against what he was pleased to call "the false American principles [i. e. of union], so industriously promulgated by the Representative of the United States:" and after complacently intimating that the British "Admiral goes to La Union, *well instructed* by Mr. Chatfield," he proceeded to say, "I think that his arrival there will bring the revolution to a favorable close!" But whether Mr. Pavon told the truth when he added, "Mr. Chatfield is at this moment writing to the Admiral, but charges me to salute you in his behalf, and to say that all which this contains meets his approbation," is a matter between himself and his principal. The President was naturally very indignant to find that the British Legatine was the centre of the intrigues and plots which distracted the State; and spoke with feeling of the attempt, made at this juncture, by the "well instructed" British Admiral, to coerce the State into a compliance with demands of doubtful validity, and the surrender of territorial rights, in violation alike of justice and the constitution. He very naturally conceived that this rude and hostile intervention was designed to favor the insurgents, and procure the substitution of a more manageable government than now existed.

The demands of the British Admiral were certainly very

extraordinary. It appeared that Honduras had, some months before, delegated a commissioner for a specific purpose, to the State of Costa Rica. While there, this commissioner fell in with the British Charge d' Affaires and his industrious Secretary, who, between them, prevailed upon him to sign a treaty, providing, amongst other things, for the qualified cession of portions of the territory of Honduras to Great Britain. The commissioner had no power to treat with the British Representative, and the latter knew perfectly well that no arrangement with him could be in any way binding upon Honduras. In fact, the commissioner never presumed to communicate the so-called treaty to his Government; and the first official knowledge the President had of it, was a copy enclosed to him by the British Admiral, with a demand for its immediate ratification, under threats of blockades and territorial seizures in case of refusal!

The reply of the Government was courteous, but decided; it wholly declined to ratify or in any way acknowledge the acts of the commissioner, who had not only proceeded without authority, but had assumed the exercise of powers prohibited by the constitution, for which he had now been arrested, and would be tried on a charge of treason! These things may appear incredible, yet they are not only true, but a fair illustration of the whole course of British policy in Central America. It is proper to add, that, at the outset, the Admiral was probably unaware of the nature of the fraud which was attempted; for after the explanations of the Government, he seems to have permitted the whole matter to drop.

While I was occupied in examining the papers connected with these extraordinary proceedings, Don Victorino Castellano, an influential citizen of San Salvador, who had been delegated as a commissioner to Guardiola, for the purpose of procuring his submission, returned with the gratifying intelligence that there was every prospect of success; that Guardiola had called back his advance, and agreed upon a

total suspension of hostilities for three days, to give time for a definite adjustment of differences. He, in fact, brought with him the outline of the terms upon which the General was willing quietly to lay down his arms, and disband his men, *viz.:* a general amnesty, and the immediate convocation of the State Legislature, to act upon certain alleged grievances in the internal administration, and particularly upon the pending plan of Federation. The last stipulation was made by the General with the evident purpose of relieving himself from the odium of favoring the predominant, but most artfully concealed purpose of his late Servile allies.

I was satisfied, from the moderate nature of these demands, that all danger of a collision was now over, and that my services "to keep the peace" would be no longer required. I therefore determined to retrace my steps to the Bay, and proceed on my proposed trip to San Salvador. This determination was received by our Nicaraguan attendants with a satisfaction bordering on ecstacy, and they would have saddled the horses, and started at once. But the day was intensely hot, and I preferred to ride to San Lorenzo by moonlight.

At four o'clock, Gen. Cabañas sent us a very fair dinner, and after it was despatched, we ascended the tower of the church, to witness the evening review. This church is a large, quaint structure, with a fine altar, and some dim, old paintings on the walls, which looked as if they might have hung there for centuries. From the tower we obtained a full view of the surrounding country. As I have said, Nacaome is a place of some three or four thousand inhabitants, clean, and very well built, and situated upon an eminence in the midst of a broad amphitheatre, shut in on every side by mountains. To this great natural circus there is but one entrance and exit, by the narrow winding valley of the river, which almost encloses the town in its embrace. It appears to constitute two distinct streams, and from this circumstance

it may derive its name, which, in the Mexican language, signifies *two bodies*, i. e., double stream. The town is situated on the camino real, leading to Tegucigalpa and Comyagua, the principal cities of the interior, and derives some of its importance from that circumstance. It is also very well supported by the adjacent country, which is fertile, and under what, in Central America, may be called tolerable cultivation.

From the tower we could discover many hattos, surrounded by small patches of plantains and yucas; pictures of primitive simplicity, and suggestive of unbounded rural delights. But the huts were all deserted; their owners were fugitives in the mountains; and, excepting a troop of lancers, with their weapons flashing in the sun, it might have been a painted scene, in its total absence of life and action.

The review, which took place just outside of the town, afforded an agreeable relief to the contemplation of this picture, so lovely and luxuriant, yet so deserted and lonely. When the men were paraded, I was surprised at their number, and wondered where they had been kept concealed. There were between two and three thousand,—as motley a set as can well be imagined; and, with the exception of about four hundred "veteranos" from San Salvador, dressed in accordance with their individual tastes. Some had shirts, and others jackets, but many had neither; and although I believe all had breeches, yet the legs of those breeches were of all lengths, generally reaching but a little below the knee. There were wags amongst them also, who, probably for the sake of completing the diversity, had one leg rolled up and the other let down. There were the tall, sandalled Caribs from northern Honduras, grim and silent, side by side with the smaller and more vivacious Indians of San Salvador. There were Ladinos and Mestizos, whites and negroes, constituting a living mosaic, as unique as it was unparalleled by anything which I had ever before seen. To those accus-

tomed to the well equipped and uniformed soldiery of other countries, this display would have been but little better than a broad caricature. It certainly afforded none of the "pomp and circumstance" of war, and would have made a very indifferent figure in Broadway or Hyde Park. But if brought to encounter the realities of war, weary marches, exposure, hunger, and privations of every kind, the disparity would not be so great. For these men will march, under a tropical sun, forty, fifty, and even sixty miles a-day, with no other food than a plantain and a bit of cheese; sleep, unprotected, on the bare ground, and pass, unimpaired, through fatigues which would destroy an European army in a single week. Military success depends more upon these qualities than upon simple bravery in battle. But in this respect the soldiers of Central America are far from deficient. When well officered, they fight with obstinacy and desperation. In their encounters with the Mexican troops sent against them by Iturbide, they proved themselves the better soldiers, and were almost universally successful, whatever the odds against them. The cruelties, barbarous massacres, and wholesale slaughters which have marked many of their struggles amongst themselves, have been rather due to the character of their leaders than to any natural or innate bloody disposition of the people themselves. Gen. Cabañas told me that he had never any difficulty in restraining the passions of his men; and to the credit of that officer be it said, that none of his victories have been disgraced by those atrocities which have been, unfortunately, the rule, rather than the exception, in Central America.

It was evening; the moon was shining brightly on the façade of the principal church of Nacaome, bringing in relief the gaunt, old statues of the saints which filled its various niches; the band was playing the national air on the terrace in front, and the men, relieved from duty, were reclining in groups around the plaza, and all appeared peaceful and

cheerful, when our horses were led to our door. President Lindo was urgent that I should stay; but convinced that I could be of no further service, and that our presence would materially incommode him, I persisted in my purpose of departure. A party of lancers was deputed to accompany us; and bidding our friends farewell, and "un buen exito" to their campaign, we defiled through the silent streets, on our return. I observed, however, as we rode along, that notwithstanding the apparent favorable disposition of Guardiola, Gen. Cabañas had relinquished none of his precautions. Treachery had been the vice from which he had suffered most, and beneath which the Republic had fallen. We accordingly found picquets stationed all about the town, and were more than once startled by "quien vive?" from parties concealed in the chaparral which bordered our road.

I halted, for a moment, at the hacienda where we had stopped in the morning, and experienced a real delight in relieving the proprietor of a part of the anxiety and suspense under which he was laboring. His daughter pressed my hand thankfully when I left; her heart was too full for utterance, but her face expressed more plainly than words the strength of that filial feeling which finds its highest pleasure in the solace of a parent's cares.

The heat, excitement, and exertion of the day had greatly fatigued us; and as we trotted slowly over the plain, which I have already described, I was overcome with an insurmountable drowsiness, and falling asleep, actually rode, in that state for nearly its whole length. I was only awakened by a sharp blow on my head, from an overhanging limb of a tree, just as we entered the thickly wooded valley of the river. Half an hour more brought us to our bongo, which, though far from affording luxurious accommodations, was yet, just now, a most welcome retreat. I lost no time in creeping under the chopa, and in five minutes was wrapped in deep and dreamless slumber.

CHAPTER XXIV.

LA UNION—OYSTERS—AMERICAN BOOKS—CHIQUIRIN—FRENCH FRIGATE "LA SERIEUSE"—ADMIRAL HORNBY OF THE ASIA 84—FRENCH AND ENGLISH WAR VESSELS—ASCENT OF THE VOLCANO OF CONCHAGUA—A MOUNTAIN VILLAGE—PECULIARITIES OF THE INDIANS—LAS TORTILLERAS—VOLCANO OF SAN MIGUEL—FIR FORESTS—AN ANCIENT VOLCANIC VENT—THE CRATER OF CONCHAGUA—PEAK OF SCORIÆ—VIEW FROM THE VOLCANO—ENVELOPED IN CLOUDS—PERILOUS DESCENT—YOLOLTOCA—PUEBLO OF CONCHAGUA AGAIN—AN OBSEQUIO—INDIAN WELCOME—SEMANA SANTA—DEVILS—SURRENDER OF GUARDIOLA—SAN SALVADOR—ITS CONDITION AND RELATIONS.

When morning broke, we were entering the inner bay of La Union, above which towers the great volcano of Amapala, or Conchagua. Between us and the shore, at the road of Chiquirin, where a clear mountain stream comes down from the volcano, and forms a little bay, were the British ship-of-the-line "Asia," of 84 guns, and the French frigate "La Sérieuse." The first was there on the usual semi-annual visit, for enforcing trumpery claims, and the second to watch the "Asia" and the course of events in this quarter. Its officers and crew, although it was scarcely daylight, were engaged in making soundings, and other observations on the depth, capacity, etc., of the Bay.

The Bay was still, and two hours of steady pulling brought us in front of La Union, which is a small place, deriving its entire importance from being the port of the city of San Miguel, twelve leagues in the interior, and the most impor-

tant commercial point in all Central America. Excepting three or four large bodegas or ware-houses, close to the water, belonging to the Government, and devoted to the reception of goods in bond, there was not a single object worthy of remark in the place. It nevertheless had an air of thrift; and a long dock or pier, then under construction, and designed to facilitate the landing and shipping of cargoes, showed that there was here rather more enterprise than we had yet discovered in the country.

Col. Casceris, the Commandante, had made us out with his glass, and was on the dock, together with my old friends, Dr. Drivon and Mons. Mercher, to receive and welcome us. He was a fine appearing officer, accomplished in manner, and in his tasteful undress uniform of dark green, might have been taken for an American. He had the good sense to omit parading his little garrison, and led us at once to his house, the best in the place, where we were introduced to his wife, Doña Maria, a tall, intellectual, well educated woman, whose cordial welcome made us quite at home. This lady, during my stay, was unremitting in her kindnesses, and, with her two sweet little daughters, has left an impression upon my mind as pleasing as it is ineffaceable.

The apartments which were assigned to me bore the best evidences that our host and hostess were far above the common mark, in point of education and accomplishments. A piano and a variety of music books occupied a part of the sala, and in my private chamber was a library well stocked with standard works; amongst them I observed Prescott's Mexico, Irving's Columbus, Cooper's Spy, a translation of Livingston's Code, and Spanish Lives of Washington and Dr. Franklin. The "Espy," of the lamented Cooper, I may mention, seems to be better known in Spanish America than any other work in the English language. I found it everywhere; and when I subsequently visited the Indian pueblo of Conchagua, the first alcalde produced it from an obscure corner of the ca-

bildo, as a very great treasure. He regarded it as veritable history, and thought "Señor Birch" a most extraordinary personage, and a model guerillero.

Dr. Drivon, who had recently returned from California, in high disgust, was established at the Doña Antonia's, but a square distant; and as he had often praised the oysters found in the Bay of Fonseca, I hinted to him, before we had fairly got ashore, that I was ready to pass judgment on them. Fortunately, the Indians had brought in a fresh supply that morning, and he sent round a sack-full, which were served for breakfast. They were small, compact, and salt, and we ate them with the utmost relish. All hands concurred in saying that they were quite equal to the best "New-Haveners," and the value of the Gulf of Fonseca became straightway doubled in our eyes. And then they were so cheap! As many as a man could carry for a *medio*, or six cents! We had them three times a day while we stayed in La Union, and before we left, I instructed the Doña Maria in the mysteries of pickling them, and she kindly sent me a little jar, by the Government courier, every week during the whole of the time I remained in the country. The oysters at all other places on the coast are large, soft, and insipid. Why they should differ so widely here, is a question for naturalists; I vouch only for the fact.

During the afternoon we were waited upon by the Lieutenant of "La Scrieuse," with an invitation from the commander to visit his frigate, which we agreed to do on the following day, and accordingly, next morning we set out, accompanied by a guide and Mons. Mercher. This gentleman had been an officer under the Empire, and had resided in this country for thirty years, without becoming a whit less a Frenchman, and was just as ready to hurrah for a President as an Emperor, so that thereby he went against England and British aggrandisement, and for the glorification of "la belle France!" I had the Commandante's own horse, a

noble animal, full of spirit, but so gentle that a child could manage him. M., as usual, set the town in a roar, by tumbling from his mule in the principal street; a feat which, by constant practice, he had come to perform without suffering any damage. It was twelve miles by water to Chiquirin, where the vessels were anchored, but only six overland. Our road was nothing more than a mule path, skirting the bluff shores, and winding over the broken spurs of the volcano, amongst stones and rocks, and fallen trees, which it at first seemed impossible to surmount. After a wild scramble, we reached some ranchos in the woods, which were called the Pueblecita de Chiquirin, where we could hear the thunder of the surf below us. We now descended rapidly, and soon came upon a broad, sandy beach, skirting a small harbor, within which the "Asia" and "La Sérieuse" were anchored. A bright mountain stream, leaping amongst the black rocks, here plunged into the harbor, and on its banks, beneath the tall trees, the crew of the Asia had erected a temporary forge. One party of sailors was filling water-casks, and another was engaged in towing off some cows to the ships; altogether it was a busy and exhilarating scene. We were descried from "La Sérieuse," and in a few minutes the Captain came in his gig to conduct us on board. We embarked with some difficulty; for, although the little bay is well sheltered from winds, it is so near one of the entrances of the Gulf, that the lateral swell is hardly less than the direct. We spent some hours on board the frigate, which was a model of neatness and order. The armament comprised all the latest improvements, and the crew was composed entirely of young and vigorous men. After a lunch, which was despatched with patriotic and fraternal accompaniments on both sides, I concluded an arrangement with the Captain touching an ascent, the following day, to the bare summit of the volcano, which pierced the clouds above our heads.

I thought it but civil to pay the Admiral a visit, and so waving all etiquette, and the captain favoring me with his boat, I started, under the prescribed salute, for the Asia. The Admiral received us cordially; and conducted us into his cabin, where we found his wife and her sister, and two of the admiral's own daughters—all refined and accomplished ladies, with whom we spent a most agreeable hour. It was a real luxury to hear our mother tongue again, from a woman's lips—and I regretted that a previous engagement at La Union prevented me from accepting the Admiral's kind invitation to spend the night on board. The ladies were bitten with onithology, and had a most brilliant collection of stuffed, tropical birds, which they were anxious to augment. So it was agreed that they should come up some day of the week to La Union, where I engaged to provide prog and poultry for the party.

The Asia was a great, cumbersome vessel, overstocked with men and cows and chickens, and looked like a store ship. Its guns were of the ancient fashion, of light calibre, and as compared with the heavy 64's and 32's of "La Sérieuse," quite childish and behind the age. As I glanced through its decks, and contrasted its old, heavy, stupid-looking sailors with the young, quick, and intelligent crew of the Frenchman, I could not resist the impression that England's grasp on the trident was growing feebler every day, and that another war would wrest it from her hands for ever. The commercial marine of the United States now exceeds hers; her vessels are beaten in every sea in the peaceful rivalry of trade; and France is preparing, if indeed she is not prepared, to more than regain the glory lost at Trafalgar.

Admiral Hornby was, however, the model of the frank and hearty sailor; and although I thought it was very small business for one of Nelson's men, and a Knight of Bath, to be engaged in bullying the poor devil Governments of Central

America, threatening them with blockades and the Lord knows what else, if they did not prevent their editors from "reflecting generally and particularly on the British government,"[1] still, I was glad to meet him, and would have gone far out of my way to have done him a service. He was confounded by the politics of Central America, and well he might be. What little information he possessed, it was evident enough, had been derived from English agents in the country, who had resided here for many years, and had become as essentially partisans as any of the natives—sharing in local and personal hates and jealousies, and altogether burlesquing the offices which they filled. He had been instructed that it was his duty to be particularly severe upon Honduras, San Salvador, and Nicaragua, the only liberal States of the old Republic, and unfortunately the only ones which had good harbors and valuable islands to be seized in "behalf of Her Britannic Majesty." But thus far he had had but poor success in the objects of his visit. Nicaragua had replied to his notes by enclosing a copy of that article of its constitu-

[1] "A series of articles have appeared from time to time in the papers of Nicaragua, which reflect generally and particularly upon the British government, and its respectable representative, Mr. Chatfield, as also holding up the English nation, collectively and individually, to public indignation. Such language is improper and unjust, and I bring it thus officially before your government, believing that it will make use of its influence over the public press to restrain, in future, *all offences* of this nature. * * It is my intention to return to this port in a few days, when I expect to find a satisfactory answer to this communication."—*Rear Admiral Hornby, to the Sect. of State of Nicaragua, March* 19, 1850.

"The press of Nicaragua has not held up the British nation collectively or individually to public indignation, unless by the simple announcement of such acts as have been committed in the port of San Juan, in the island of Tigre, and elsewhere. Nothing can be cited in proof of your charge; and the Supreme Director regrets, Sir, that you should counsel him to commit an unlawful act, by attacking the *liberty of the press*, which is guarantied in the most solemn manner by the constitution of the State."—*Reply of Senor Salinas, Sect. of State, March* 31, 1850.

tion guarantying the liberty of the press; Honduras had flatly refused to have an unconstitutional treaty crammed down its throat; and San Salvador had with equal decision declined to recognize an obnoxious citizen, who claimed to be British Vice Consul, under a commission from Mr. Chatfield. And in the end, the Admiral had to take his departure, without having achieved anything beyond deepening the hatred towards the British government—a hatred, unfortunately too well founded, and the necessary result of a long series of insults and aggressions.

Our return to La Union was unmarked by a single incident worthy of record, except the unsolicited presence of a couple of pumas, for a moment, in our path; and the evening was devoted to preparations for ascending the volcano. At about nine o'clock the Captain of "La Sérieuse" arrived, and next morning, long before daylight, accompanied by a soldier of the garrison carrying an immense alforgas, prepared by the Doña Maria, we set out. We were not long in passing through the town, and the chaparral which surrounds it; and then, striking into a dark and ragged ravine, we commenced the ascent. As day dawned, I observed with surprise that the path was broad and smooth; and we now began to meet numbers of Indians, men and women, laden with fruit, corn, and other commodities, coming down from the volcano. I was greatly puzzled to account for any population in these rocky fastnesses, when the path turned suddenly up the almost precipitous banks of the ravine, and we found ourselves, a league and a half from the port, in the Indian Pueblo of Conchagua. Its site is most remarkable. Here is a broad, irregular shelf on the volcano's side, the top, if I may so speak, of a vast field of lava, which, many ages ago, flowed downward to the sea. This shelf is covered with rocks thrown together in rough and frowning heaps, to make room for the dwellings of the inhabitants, which are half hidden by these rude pyramids. We wound some minutes through the crooked

streets, and then reached the plaza, a large area, in the centre of which stands a low, picturesque church, built some time in the seventeenth century. We could scarcely comprehend that in a land of broad, fertile, and well-watered plains, a spot like this, rugged, sterile, and without a single fountain, should have been selected as the residence of any human being, much less of an entire community of two or three thousand souls. Nothing but purposes of protection and defence could account for the circumstance; and although a village may have existed here before the Conquest, yet I am disposed to credit the vague tradition which I afterwards heard, that a great portion of these Indians formerly lived where La Union now stands, and on the islands of the Gulf, and subsequently fled to this secluded spot to avoid the cruelty of the bucaneers, who, from 1650, for more than half a century, infested these shores. Here they seem resolved to remain, although every drop of water for their use, except that caught from the clouds during the rainy season, has to be brought for more than a league. The Government of San Salvador has offered every inducement to them—lands, exemption from taxation, and other privileges—to settle at the port, but they have steadily refused.

Although it was not yet sunrise, the town was active; and the whole female population was busy with its task of grinding and preparing tortillas for breakfast. Through the open doorways we caught glimpses of the inmates at their work, as cheerful and contented there, on the barren mountain side, as when the whole broad land was their own, and from these rugged heights they offered their adorations to the monarch Sun, the glorious emblem of their God.

Little patches of plantains, and some palm and fruit trees occupied the narrow spaces between the heaps of rocks and the huts, and completed a picture of primitive life, not less striking and beautiful, though less luxuriant, than that of Nindiri. Our presence created quite a sensation; and,

fearful of an obsequio, I hurried our guide, and passed rapidly through the village. Beyond, the road was more broken, and hundreds of paths diverged from it in every direction. We soon came to clearings for purposes of cultivation.

"LAS TORTILLERAS."

Wherever there were a few square yards of soil, the trees and bushes had been removed, and maize had been planted. There were also some considerable openings, covered with stumps and fallen trees, resembling those which the traveller constantly encounters on our frontiers. They recalled to mind my border rambles, thousands of miles to the northward; but I listened in vain for the solitudes to echo back the clear, ringing blows of the settler's axe.

All around us were huge volcanic rocks, and we wound for two hours through labyrinthine ravines, dark with trees, constantly ascending, but yet unable to see beyond the tangled verdure of the forest. Finally, however, the trees became fewer, and at eight o'clock we had emerged beyond the forests, and stood upon the grassy, scoriaceous slope of the volcano. And although the summit seemed more dis-

tant than ever, yet our position overlooked an almost interminable expanse of country. The Bay of La Union was mapped at our feet, and we could trace its esteros, gleaming like silver threads, amidst the level, green alluvions. To our left was the broad valley of San Miguel, but it was concealed from view by a mist, like an ocean of milk, above which, island-like, to mid-heaven, towered the great volcano of San Miguel—with the exception of Ometepec, the most regular in its outlines of any in Central America. From its summit rose a plume of white smoke, opalescent in the sun.[1]

We halted for a quarter of an hour in silent admiration, and then resumed our course. We were on one of the bare ribs of the volcano, with deep ravines on either side, up which the forests, reduced to a narrow line of trees, extended for some distance farther. These spurs or ribs of the mountain are covered with long, coarse grass, which gives them an appearance of great smoothness; but it only conceals sharp, angular rocks, and a treacherous scoriaceous soil. Our path here, therefore, was more toilsome than in the forest; and as we advanced, the mules suffered greatly. I had given the Captain his choice of animals at the start, and he had selected a large, sleek, gentle mule, leaving me a little, black macho, a villanous hard trotter, vicious, but tough as iron. The Captain had kept ahead while we had a path, and seemed to have it very comfortable; but now, when the ascent commenced in earnest, the black macho left

[1] The port of La Union is forty-five miles distant, in a right line, from the volcano of Coseguina, and on the occasion of its eruption, was deserted by the entire population, who fled in dismay to San Miguel. The darkness was so great that they were obliged to carry torches, which, however, gave no light, except for two or three yards around them. The terrified inhabitants, some on foot and others mounted, were followed by their equally terrified cattle, and even wild beasts, tame with fear, joined in the unearthly procession, while birds lit upon the travellers in affright, and would not be driven away.

him far behind. The Captain spurred, and whipped, and "sacre'd" in vain; his mule finally came to a dead halt. We were now at the head of the ravines, whence the cone of the volcano rose sheer and regular as the pyramids. Upon one side of our path, and five or six hundred feet below us, was a belt of tall and beautiful fir trees, amongst which we discovered, with our glasses, a party of Indians collecting branches, wherewith to decorate the streets and churches, during the Semana Santa. As we acsended, we had startled many deer, and numbers of them now stood, with heads elevated and ears thrown forward, contemplating us from a distance. There were also hundreds of wild turkeys, and while the Captain was resting his mule, I pursued a flock of them, and killed two, with as many discharges of my pistol; no great feat, by the way, for they were so tame that I came within fifty feet of them.

Again we started, and now the narrow path wound zigzag up the face of the mountain, so that in riding along we could almost lay our hands on the turn next above us. I let my macho take his course, and he picked his way as unconcernedly as if traversing a plain. I only feared that the indurated scoriæ might give way beneath his feet, and I shuddered, as I glanced down the steeps, to think what would be the inevitable result. And thus we toiled on, slowly and painfully, winding up slopes which no human being could have ascended directly. Finally we reached a spot where, some time or other, there had been a slide of the earth, forming a narrow shelf; and here the Captain's mule again came to a dead halt. Whip nor spur could move him. Finally, however, I took hold of his halter, and succeeded in leading him into the narrow path, when he went on as before. At nine o'clock, we had reached the summit of the first peak, and stood upon the edge of a great funnel-shaped hollow, lined with grass, which had been an ancient vent. Its walls upon one side had been broken down, and we could see, far below,

the rough outlines of the lava current which had flowed from it into the ocean. There were a number of these vents at various points, but the crater was still above us. In half an hour we reached its edge, and wound down its ragged side to a broad plain at its bottom. It was an immense amphitheatre, walled with precipitous cliffs. The eastern side was elevated, and covered with a forest of beautiful pines; its western depressed, with a spring of water at its lowest part, surrounded with a variety of trees and vines, constituting a sort of jungle, much frequented, our guide told us, by wild beasts. The rest of the area was covered with grass, now sere and yellow from the long drought. It was a singular spot, with no horizon but the rocky rim of the crater, and no view except above, where the sun shone down blindingly from a cloudless sky. We stood still, and like the pulsations of the earth's great heart, we could hear the waters of the Pacific beating at the base of the mountain. I thought of a Milton prisoned here, face to face with heaven, listening to the deep utterances of the ocean, and striking the strings of his awful lyre, to the majestic measure of the sea!

"Let us go," said the Captain with a shudder; "this is terrible." We scrambled out of the crater on the side opposite from where we entered, towards a yet higher peak of scoriæ, connected by a narrow ridge with the body of the mountain. Upon that peak, whose feet were planted in the sea, the warder at the entrance of the Bay, there was a kind of look-out established by the Government, with a flagstaff, and a series of telegraphic signals, to convey intelligence to the port. This was the point which we were most anxious to reach, and from whence I anticipated being able to map out the entire Gulf. It may seem hardly possible, but the narrow ridge connecting the two peaks was barely wide enough for a mule path; it was like walking on the ridge of a house. The Captain refused to ride along it, and in order to keep him company, I also dismounted, and we pro-

ceeded on foot. It was past ten o'clock when we reached the summit of the peak; but although almost exhausted by our perhaps unnecessary exertions, we lost all sense of fatigue in the magnificence and extent of the prospect, which was bounded only by the great dividing ridge of the Cordilleras, looking like a faint cloud in the distance, upon one hand, and by the ocean horizon upon the other. The Gulf with its islands was revealed for its whole extent at a single glance, and it seemed as if we could almost look into the great Lake of Nicaragua, whose mountain-framed basin stretched away in illimitable perspective.

At the foot of the flag-staff was a little hut, half excavated in the earth, its roof heavily loaded with stones, to prevent it from being swept away by the winds. Here we found a man, a broad-shouldered, merry Indian, who was the watcher or sentinel, and who was greatly rejoiced to receive us. He had been "observador" here for six years, and we were the first *blancos* who had ascended during that period. And he produced his glass and made himself almost annoying in his zeal to point out to us the features of interest surrounding the Gulf.

Meantime our guide reached us, with the mules and the alforgas. Amongst our equipments was the flag of the United States, which was at once run up to the top of the signal post and answered from the port and the French frigate. "I accept the omen," said the Captain gravely, and as I then thought and still believe prophetically; "that flag will soon be planted here *en permanence*, the symbol of dominion over two seas, and of a power the greatest the world has ever seen."

The peak on which we stood seemed to have been formed in great part of scoriæ and other materials thrown out from the principal crater. It was a sharp cone, and the rounded summit was not more than sixty feet across. In fact, there was barely room for ourselves, the flag-staff, the hut, and

the mules. It was now midday, and the thermometer marked only 68° of Fahrenheit, while at the same hour it stood at 86° at the port, a difference of sixteen degrees.

We had been nearly six hours in ascending, and after the novelty of the scene was a little over, we got beneath the hut, and helped ourselves to the plentiful contents of our guide's alforgas, and then, without intending it, both fell asleep. I was awakened by the Captain, who looked pinched, and chilly, and rising, found myself uncomfortably cold. We crept outside; but in little more than an hour, everything had undergone a total change. Above and around us the sun was shining clearly, except when a thin rift of drizzling cloud, rapidly sweeping by, half-hid us from each other's view. But below and around us, there was only a heaving ocean of milky white clouds—now swelling upwards to our very feet, and then sinking down so as to reveal long reaches of the bare mountain side. A current of sea air, saturated with moisture, sweeping past, had encountered the volcano, and become partially condensed in its cooler atmosphere. I asked the observador if it was common, and he said it happened almost daily; but that sometimes the wind was not strong enough to sweep the mist away, and then he had sat here for hours, *muy triste*, very melancholy, in the gloom. It was then an excellent time to pray, he added, with a laugh.

In an hour the mists had dissipated, and the view was again unobstructed. And, having taken the bearings of the principal landmarks, the Captain and myself, with the aid of the observador and our guide, amused ourselves by loosening rocks, and starting them down the side of the cone. They went leaping down, dashing the scoriæ on all sides, like spray, in their bounds; and, when they reached the belt of forest, we could see the trees bow down before them like grass before the mower's scythe. One of these rocks, which we started with difficulty, must have weighed upwards of a ton;

and we afterwards learned that it had been dashed to pieces within only a quarter of a mile of the Bay of Chiquirin.

At three o'clock, the observador having volunteered to show us a better route, we started on our return. He took us by a path running laterally down the side of the ridge connecting the two peaks to which I have referred, so steep that we repented having undertaken it, but so narrow, at the same time, as to render turning about impossible. In places my macho braced his feet and slid down a hundred feet at a time. It was "neck or nothing." The Captain was behind, but how he got along I did not stop to inquire. It was one of those occasions when every man looks out for himself. After fifteen or twenty minutes of this kind of progress, my hair was less disposed to the perpendicular, and I began to have great faith in my macho. I was only nervous about my saddle girths.

In three-quarters of an hour, during which time we had descended more than two thousand feet, we reached the head of one of the principal ravines which furrow the mountain. Here was a narrow shelf, where was built the hatto of Juan, the observador, and where his family resided. Here, too, completely embowered amongst the trees, with a large reservoir, fifty feet long, cut by the ancients in the rock, was a copious spring, called Yololtoca; the ground all around it was paved with flat stones, and the approaches were protected by masonry. I was surprised to learn that it was from this spring that the inhabitants of Conchagua obtained now, as they had from time immemorial, their principal supply of water. It is fully two-thirds of the distance up the volcano, and more than a league from the town. While we stood beside the reservoir, to allow our mules to drink, a troop of girls came toiling up a flight of steps near by. They were from the village, and, like the aguadoras of Masaya, had little sacks strapped over their shoulders, wherein to carry

their water jars, when weary of supporting them on their heads.

After resting a few minutes, we continued our descent. The path was now wider and better, but in some places, where the feet of the aguadoras had worn narrow steps in the rock, which the mules were obliged scrupulously to follow, exceedingly difficult. An occasional fallen tree obstructed our course, over which we had great trouble in forcing our mules. But after a deal of excitement, and whipping and hallooing, half an hour before sunset, we once more reached the village of Conchagua. As we approached, we had observed a man, stationed on a high rock, with an immense rattle, like those anciently used by watchmen in our cities. The moment he saw us, he sprung it, and leaping down, from rock to rock, disappeared in the direction of the town. Nearing the plaza, we saw the result; men and women, all gayly dressed, were hurrying in that direction, and there was evidently great excitement. At first, as this was holy week, I thought some of its ceremonies were in progress; but when I saw a couple of alcaldes, with heads uncovered, and holding aloft their wands of office, advance to meet us, the awful truth that we had unwittingly fallen into the jaws of an obsequio, was forced upon me. The Captain rode up, in evident surprise, and inquired what I supposed the Indians wanted. I professed ignorance. Meantime the alcaldes had planted themselves in front of my macho, and one of them, without so much as "by your leave," had taken the bridle in his hands, while the other commenced reading an order of the municipality, felicitating the representative of the Great and Powerful Republic of El Norte on his arrival in the loyal Pueblo of Conchagua, and inviting him to a *convite*, which, he added in parenthesis, was then ready in the cabildo; and concluding with "Dios, Union, Libertad!" and "Viva la Republica del Norte!" In the latter the people all joined. I thanked

them in corresponding hyperbolical phrase, and then introduced to them my friend, the Captain, as an officer of another great Republic; whereupon they uttered another round of vivas,—not for the Republic of France, but "El Amigo del Ministro del Norte!" This over, we were marched, with an alcalde on each side, to the cabildo. It was a large building, with a mud floor, and a double row of benches extending around it, close to the wall. At one end was an elevated platform, upon which were three or four elaborately carved and antiquated chairs and a desk, where the alcaldes held their courts, and administered justice; and at the other end a pair of stocks, wherein refractory criminals were confined. when occasion required. Against the wall, above the seats of the alcaldes, hung the fragments of an ancient flag; but no one could tell me its history; it was "muy, muy antiguo!" very, very old.

In the centre of the apartment was a table for six; the Captain, the two principal alcaldes, the bastonero or marshal, the cura, and myself. This part of the obsequio was unobjectionable, and the distinguished guests performed their parts with spirit, and to the great admiration of the spectators. Commend me to an ascent of the volcano of Conchagua for an appetite! Before we had half finished, it grew dark, and a dozen boys holding torches were introduced and stationed on the alcalde's platform. There they stood like bronze statues, without moving, until we had finished. It was the most extraordinary meal of my life; and I experienced a singular sensation when I glanced around upon the swarthy, earnest faces of the Indians, rank on rank, only half revealed by the light of the torches, and reflected that here, in the volcanic fastnesses of San Salvador, amongst a people in whose veins not a drop of white blood flowed, the descendants of those who had fought against Cortez and Alvarado, the name of an American was not only a shield of security, but a passport to the rudest heart. It sounded

strangely to hear them talk of Washington as the political regenerator, not of his own country alone, but of the continent and the world.

We returned to La Union by moonlight. During the day my companions, according to arrangement, had started on their return to Nicaragua, and I was now left alone with Ben. I had determined to await here the result of affairs at Nacaome, from whence we had not as yet received any intelligence. That very night a reinforcement from San Miguel marched silently through the streets of La Union, and in less than half an hour were embarked on their way to San Lorenzo. It was a forced march, and the practical reply to the despatches borne by "Diablo Negro."

The day following was the holiest day of the Holy Week, and was ushered in with the firing of guns in the little plaza. The streets all wore their liveliest garb, and business of every kind was suspended. At nine o'clock the inhabitants all flocked to the church, whither I followed. But it was crowded to suffocation, and I was neither Christian nor curious enough to remain; accordingly I joined Dr. Drivon, at his rooms at the Doña Antonia's, from whence the whole out-door performances could be witnessed. At eleven o'clock the crowd emerged into the plaza, where a procession, preceded by some musicians, was formed. In advance went twenty or thirty men and boys, half naked, and painted in a frightful manner, each bearing a wooden spear; these were supposed to represent Jews, Moors, and Devils, who are all classed in the same pleasant category. They engaged in mimic fights, and dashed through the streets, clearing every living thing before the procession, and by their fantastic actions creating great merriment. Then followed twelve boys, some white and others dark, to represent the apostles, and two sweet little girls, dressed in gauze, personifying the Marys. Joseph of Arimathea, a mestizo, staggered beneath a heavy cross, and on a bier, borne by six young men, was

a wax figure representing Christ. Priests and chanters surrounded it, and a crowd of women and children, with palm branches, followed. The procession halted at every corner, while rockets were let off in the plaza. It was an incongruous, typical ceremony, allusive apparently to the crucifixion and burial of Christ. I asked Doña Antonia's son, who had been one of the apostles, on his return to the house, what it meant. "Oh, nothing," he replied briskly, "only Christ is dead, and we shall have no God for three days!" From this reply I inferred that it had produced no very lasting impression upon the minds of the apostles, whatever its effect upon the other participants.

Next morning I was roused at daylight by the firing of guns, but supposing that it only part of the fiesta, I went to sleep again. When I rose for breakfast, however, the Commandante placed in my hands an open letter from Gen. Cabañas, announcing the surrender of Gen. Guardiola, on substantially the basis before proposed, and the immediate dispersal of his troops. In less than one year after, Guardiola was in the field, as the aid of the President of San Salvador, against the very Serviles who had decoyed him into overt acts against his own government! Thus ended the disturbances in Honduras, which had, at one time, threatened to break up the proposed Union of the States, and, for the time, British and Servile policy were again crushed to earth.

The Admiral had already prepared to sail, and "La Sérieuse," was every way ready to follow, at a moment's warning. And although a deputation had arrived from San Miguel, to conduct me to that city, yet the principal object of my visit having been accomplished, I was anxious to return to Leon, which I did a day or two subsequently, having in the meantime made another trip to the island of Tigre, and completed the observations necessary to the construction of the Map of the Gulf of Fonseca, elsewhere presented.

I regretted much my inability to spend more time in San Salvador, which is, in many respects, the most interesting and important State of the five which composed the old federation. In territorial extent, it is the smallest, but it has a greater relative population than either of the others, and its people are better educated and more industrious. It has, from the first, been the stronghold of the Liberal party, and has constantly adhered, with heroic devotion, to the idea of Nationality. The restoration of the Republic of Central America is the grand object of its policy, and to this all other questions are regarded as subordinate. It has had frequent collisions with the agents of Great Britain, (who, without exception, are active Servile partisans,) but has always maintained itself with firmness and dignity. As a consequence, it has been grossly maligned, and its people held up as impersonations of perfidy and disorder. But there is no part of Central, nor of Spanish America, where individual rights are better respected, or the duties of republicanism better understood. Whatever the future history of Central America, its most important part, in all that requires activity, concentration, and force, will be performed by San Salvador.

CHAPTER XXV.

DEPARTURE FOR THE UNITED STATES—AN AMERICAN HOTEL IN GRANADA—LOS COCOS—VOYAGE THROUGH THE LAKE—DESCENT OF THE RIVER—SAN JUAN—CHAGRES—HOME—OUTLINE OF NICARAGUAN CONSTITUTION—CONCLUSION OF NARRATIVE.

In the month of June succeeding the events detailed above, having received leave of absence from my Government, I started from Leon on my return to the United States. It was the commencement of the rainy season, and already the vegetable world was putting on new robes of green. I found, as I rode from one town to another, that a year had wrought a wonderful change in the aspect of the country. The intervention of the United States, and the probable speedy opening of Californian transit, had contributed to restore public confidence, and had given a new impulse to industry. I observed that fully one-third more ground had been put under cultivation than the year previously, and that in other respects considerable improvements had been made.

In Granada an American hotel had been established, and I found that my old and excellent friend Dr. S. was no longer the sole representative of the United States in that hospitable city. I need not add that I took up my quarters at the "Fonda Americana." But my stay was brief. The novelty of a residence amongst orange and palm trees had quite worn off; life had become tame and monotonous; and I longed for the action and bustle of home. The *playa* of Granada was not less cheerful than when I landed; the

tropical winds were as bland, and the sun as brilliant. The Indians girls were not less arch, nor the languid Señoras less beautiful; the Señorita Terisa sang operas quite as well as before; but still there was a vacancy to be supplied. The essential element of vitality was wanting; and however much I had been taken at the outset with the primitive aspect of society, and the quiet, dreamy habits of the people, I was now more than ever convinced that life, to be relished, must be earnest, and that its highest and keenest enjoyments are involved in what is often called its "warfare."

Three days after my arrival in Granada, I embarked at "Los Cocos," in a bongo loaded with Brazil wood, for San Juan. We dawdled, day after day, along the northern shore of the lake, after the immemorial fashion amongst the mariners, stopped again at El Pedernal," and the Bahita de San Miguel, and on the morning of the sixth day reached San Carlos. My rotund friend, the Commandante, arrayed in a new uniform, and reinstated in his old quarters, welcomed me with all the warmth of his genial temper; and again I was installed, amongst the pigeons and chickens, in his house on the promontory.

I was impatient to proceed, but we did not get away until the sun was setting behind Salentenami, throwing a flood of radiance over the lake, while the river flowed dark and silent beneath the shadows of the dense forests on its banks. The descent of the San Juan is an easy matter compared with the ascent. It is usually accomplished in two days; but on the morning of our second day, our patron Antonio, in an attempt to "shoot" the central channel of the Rapids of Machuca, ran us upon the rocks, where we remained for thirty hours, until relieved by the united crews of six bongos, which, in ascending and descending, had, in the meantime, reached the rapids. Our situation during this time was perilous in the extreme, and had not our boat been new and staunch, it must inevitably have gone to pieces. After the

first excitement was over, I amused myself by shooting alligators, in their attempts to ascend the rapids. A dozen of their ugly heads might be seen above the water at the same moment. By keeping in the eddies, they contrive to get up, but it is a long process for them, and requires an entire day.

San Juan had undergone very little change since my previous visit. My friend, the Consul General, had gone home, and the supreme authority was vested in a little man named Green, one of those who, in conjunction with McDonald, Walker & Co., had invented the Mosquito Kingdom! The two wan policemen were also gone; one had absconded with a quantity of the Consul's papers, and the other, I believe, had died. Their place was now filled by a dozen negroes from Jamaica, not particularly prepossessing in their exteriors, or agreeable in their manners. Captain Shepherd still swung in his hammock, clinging tenaciously to his parchment grants; and Monsieur Sigaud, upright, honest-hearted Frenchman, was my host. His titled countryman, the Viscomte, oblivious of slaughtered pigs, had made his peace with the English authorities, and in conjunction with a German Jew, of doubtful antecedents, had now the control of the Custom House.

There was a large party of Americans in San Juan. They had brought the news of the ratification of the Clayton and Bulwer treaty, and the people were ecstatic under the belief that they were thereby to be relieved from British rule. But Dr. Green cooled their ardor by producing a letter from the Foreign office, in which the treaty was interpreted to be an implied if not an express recognition of the British establishments on the coast, by the American Government.

The British steamer Dee arrived in port the morning after my arrival. She stayed but a single day, and on the 26th of June, 1850, I bade farewell to the shores of Nicaragua.[1]

[1] I found in San Juan the crew of an American vessel, wrecked a short

Twenty-four hours brought us in sight of Chagres, where, beneath the old Castle of San Felipe, the "Georgia" and "Philadelphia," with steam already up, were taking on board their last passengers, for the United States. I had barely time to get my baggage on board the former, before the anchor was lifted, and we were under way, "homeward bound." A brief and pleasant passage of eight days to New York, offered a striking contrast to our month's imprisonment in the little "Frances," outward bound. The captain was right; that voyage to San Juan was really her "thirty-seventh and last," she was condemned on her return, and has probably gone "where all good vessels go." Peace to her venerable timbers!

* * * * * * * * *

The preceding rapid narrative of incidents connected with my residence in Nicaragua might be greatly extended: but so far as my principal purpose of conveying some idea of the geography, scenery, resources, and antiquities of the country, and of the character, habits, and actual situation of its people, is concerned, it is probably unnecessary to add anything to what I have already said. A few words in respect to the Government and present constitution of the country may not be unacceptable, and with these I shall close this portion of my work, and pass to the consideration of other, but collateral, subjects.

The dissolution of the Federal Republic of Central America, in 1838, left the various States which had composed it in a

time previously, in the vicinity of that port. They had barely escaped with their lives. As there was no American Consul to provide for their return home, I proposed some arrangement to the commander of the "Dee" for conveying them to Chagres. But he cut the matter short by offering them all a free passage. I have had but few opportunities, in this narrative, of saying good things of our English cousins in Central America; and I have therefore the more pleasure in mentioning this incident, illustrating the honorable reputation for generosity enjoyed by the British sailor.

singular and anomalous position. Some of them still adhered to the idea of nationality, but could not disguise the fact that the Federation no longer existed. Under those circumstances, they severally assumed the powers and responsibilities of independent sovereignties. Their respective constitutions, framed to conform to the federal system, now required to be altered to suit their new conditions. The Government of Nicaragua convened a Constituent Assembly for that specific purpose, which, on the 12th of November 1838, proclaimed a new constitution. It was accepted in due form by the people, and has since constituted the fundamental law of the State.

This instrument is thoroughly republican in its provisions. It provides that the Executive Power shall be vested in an officer styled the "Supreme Director," who is elected directly by popular vote, for the term of two years, but is ineligible for two consecutive terms. He must be a native of Central America, a resident for five years in the State, and have attained the age of thirty years. The legislative power is vested in an Assembly, composed of a Senate and House of Representatives. The Senate consists of two members from each of the six districts into which the State is divided; they must possess all the qualifications of the Supreme Director, besides actual property to the value of $1000. They hold their offices for four years, and are so classified that the term of office of one-fourth of the number expires annually. They are not eligible beyond two consecutive terms, nor can any ecclesiastic be elected to their body. The Representatives are apportioned on the basis of every twenty thousand inhabitants. They must have attained twenty-five years of age, have resided one year in the State, and may be either secular or ecclesiastic. They are eligible for only two consecutive terms. No officer in the employ of the Government can be elected to either branch of the Assembly; nor can any member accept a public appointment. The acts of this

Assembly require a vote of two-thirds of each branch, and the approval of the Supreme Director, in order to have the force of law. All males of the age of twenty years, born in the country, are electors. Exceptions are made in favor of married males and persons who have obtained a scientific degree or acquired a liberal profession. These secure the privileges of electors at the age of eighteen years. All persons convicted of criminal offences, who traffic in slaves or are privy to such traffic, or who accept employment, or titles, or pensions, from other Governments, forfeit their citizenship. This right is also suspended in certain cases, one of which is rather extraordinary. An individual who accepts the position of personal servant to another, is incapable, for the time being, of exercising his political privileges.

The rights of the citizen are defined to be "Liberty, Equality, Security of Life and Property, all of which are inseparable and inalienable, and inherent in the nature of man." Their preservation is declared to be the primary object of all society and government. "Every man is free, and can neither sell himself nor be sold by others." And although the Catholic religion is recognized by the State, and protected by the Government, yet all other religions are tolerated, and their free and public exercise guarantied. Entire liberty of speech and the freedom of the press are also guarantied, but individuals are subject to arraignment for their abuse. The right of petition, the principle of the inviolability of domicil, the security of seal, etc., etc., are recognized in their full extent, and are placed beyond the reach of the legislative or administrative powers.

The Judiciary consists of a Supreme Court, the members of which are named by the House of Representatives, and confirmed by the Senate, three in each department, who hold their offices for only four years, but are always eligible to re-election. One in each district is designated as Presid-

ing Judge; and the President Judges, meeting annually in the capital, constitute a Court of Appeals, or final resort.

In short, as observed at the outset, the whole spirit and all the provisions of this constitution are eminently republican. It displays a full knowledge of the duties and requirements of Government, and needs only to be faithfully administered to meet all the purposes of a sound political organization. If it does not do this, the causes of its failure lie elsewhere,—in the circumstances of the people.

When I arrived in the country, the Government was organized as follows:

Señor Don Norberto Ramirez,	. . .	Supreme Director.
" " Sebastian Salinas,	. . . .	Sect. of Foreign Relations.
" " Pablo Buitrago,	. . . .	" of War.
" " Jose T. Munoz,	. . . . .	General in Chief.
" " Chavarria,	. . . . .	Treasurer.

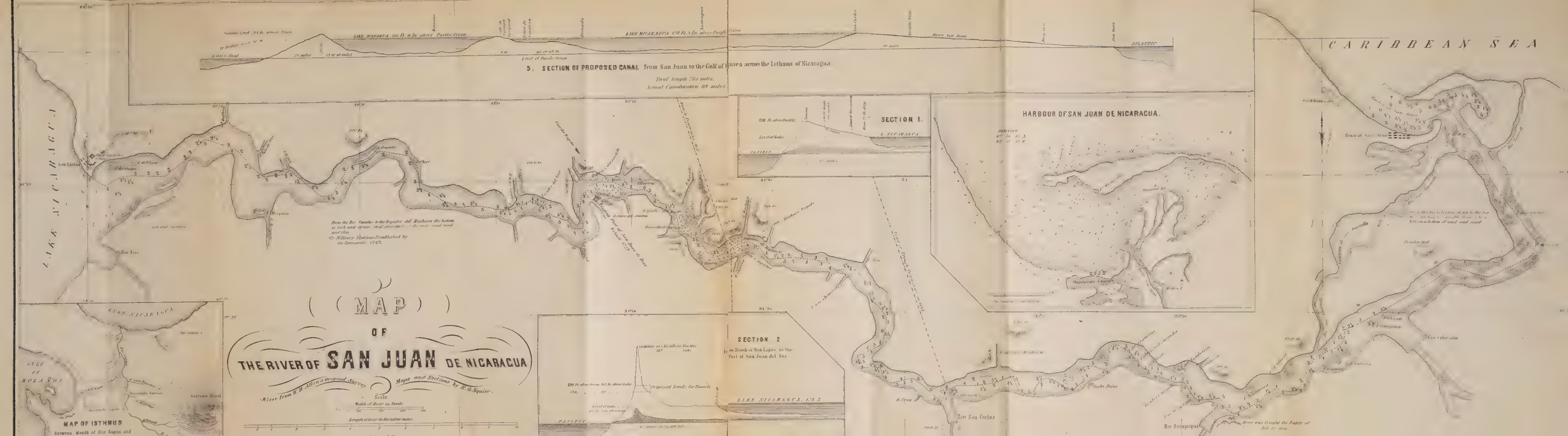
And here I must be permitted to bear testimony, not only to the public zeal, the earnest and unselfish patriotism, and the unflagging spirit of these men, who, under the most depressed and adverse circumstances, threatened from abroad, and harrassed at home, nevertheless dedicated themselves fearlessly and faithfully to the interests and requirements of their country. Señor Ramirez had once filled the office of President of San Salvador. Moderate, yet firm, a Liberal from principle not interest, with large experience amongst men, a thorough practical education, joined to great simplicity and dignity of manners, he was a man eminently adapted to the post which he occupied. Señor Salinas had been long identified with Nicaragua; and had held the office of Secretary of Foreign Affairs during several administrations. His abilities are well exhibited in the discussions with the British diplomatic agents, in respect to the Mosquito shore. In argument, temper, and force, they compare favorably with any similar documents in any language, and furnish striking

contrasts to the correspondence on the English side. Señor Buitrago, although now holding the post of Secretary of War, was once the highest officer in the State. As an orator and a publicist, he is probably entitled to the first position in the country. He is, I believe, the author of the existing constitution, and is now a member of the new National Representation. Of Gen. Muñoz I have elsewhere spoken. To him, it is universally conceded, belongs the honor of having effectively reformed the army, and, from the terror and scourge of the State, made it the bulwark of its peace.

The political history of Nicaragua, up to the period of the dissolution of the Confederacy, in 1838, is so intimately connected with that of the other States, composing the old Republic, as to preclude its separate consideration. And, subsequent to that event, its relations with San Salvador and Honduras, with which it has recently effected a Federal Union, have been so close, that the history of one must, almost of necessity, be the history of the other. I have therefore proposed to reserve all that I may have to say upon these subjects for a distinct essay, entitled "*Outline of the Political History of Central America*," which will be found appended to this volume.

END OF NARRATIVE.

INTEROCEANIC CANAL.


((MAP))
OF
THE RIVER OF SAN JUAN DE NICARACUA
River from U. H. Alfen's Original Survey. Maps and Sections by E. G. Squier.
Scale.
Width of River in Yards.
Length of River in Statute miles.
5. SECTION OF PROPOSED CANAL From San Juan to the Gulf of Dulce, across the Isthmus of Nicaragua.
Total length 783 miles.
Actual Canalization 118 miles.
LAKE MANAGUA 136 Ft. 11 In. above Pacific Ocean
LAKE NICARAGUA 158 Ft. 5 In. above Pacific Ocean
Level of Pacific Ocean
Este's Head
25 miles
53 miles
80 miles
River San Juan
ATLANTIC
SECTION 1.
238 Ft. above Pacific.
Level of Lake.
L. NICARAGUA
PACIFIC
HARBOUR OF SAN JUAN DE NICARACUA.
Shepherd's Landg.
CARIBBEAN SEA
Town of San Juan del Norte
Fort Castillo
Fort Webster
Fort Wellington
Fort Prince of Wales
Fort Bowles
Fort Fredk. Augustus
Fort Victoria
Fort Royal
Fort Serapiqui
Fort Castillo Viejo
Fort Castillo Nuevo
Fort Fredk. Augustus
Fort Victoria
Fort Royal
Fort Serapiqui
Fort Castillo Viejo
Fort Castillo Nuevo
Rio Colorado
Rio San Carlos
Rio Serapiqui
Rio Frio
Rio Sarapiqui
Rio Sucio
Rio Tabacon
Rio Tabacon Viejo
Rio Tabacon Nuevo
Rio Tabacon Viejo
Rio Tabacon Nuevo
Rio Tabacon Viejo
Rio Tabacon Nuevo

INTEROCEANIC CANAL.

CHAPTER I.

CONSIDERATION OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL FEATURES OF NICARAGUA, AS CONNECTED WITH THE PROJECTED INTEROCEANIC CANAL.

Columbus discovered the American Continent, and Magellan the Straits which bear his name, in their attempts to find "a short and easy passage to the Indies." The same hope sustained Cortes, when, followed by only a handful of soldiers, he advanced into the heart of the hostile Empire of Mexico. That leading object was not abandoned in his reverses, or forgotten in his triumphs. The Emperor Charles V., in a letter written in 1523, from Valladolid, enjoins him to search carefully for "*el Secreto del Estrecho*," the Secret of the Strait, which should connect the eastern and western shores of New Spain, and shorten by two-thirds, as it was then supposed, the route from Cadiz to "the land of spices" and the shores of Cathay. In his reply to this letter, Cortes indulges in the expression of the highest hopes of making this grand discovery, "which," he adds, "would render the King of Spain master of so many kingdoms, that he might consider himself Lord of the World."

But Cortes and his followers sought in vain; the "Secret

of the Strait" was past finding out; and the fact that no natural communication existed between the two seas, became early established. From that moment, as I have already said, the project of opening an artificial communication from one ocean to the other, has occupied the minds of men. Five principal points have been indicated as probably feasible for that grand undertaking. They are:—

1st. The Isthmus of Tehuantepec, between the sources of the Rio Chimalapa or Chicapa, which falls into the Pacific Ocean; and the Rio Coatzacalco, or Huasacualco, falling into the Atlantic.

2d. The Isthmus of Nicaragua, *via* the Rio San Juan, Lake Nicaragua, to the Gulf of Papagayo, the Port of Realejo, or the Gulf of Fonseca.

3d. The Isthmus of Panama.

4th. The Isthmus of Darien, or Cupica.

5th. The Isthmus between the Rio Atrato, falling into the Atlantic, and the Rio Choco, which empties into the Pacific.

From the period when Gomara wrote, in 1551, until the present time, the subject of the communication has been a matter of much speculation; but beyond a few partial surveys, until very lately, nothing of a practical character has been attempted. The recent acquisitions of the United States on the Pacific, attended by the discovery of extraordinary mineral wealth in California, have given this direction to American enterprise, and have rendered it probable that the two oceans will speedily be connected at several points by railroad or canal, one or both, and that a complete revolution will thereby be effected in the commercial relations of the world.

It has been universally conceded that the only communication which can really confer any great benefit upon commerce, must be by means of a canal capable of passing with safety and rapidity the largest ships. And it has as generally been conceded, by those who have investigated the sub-

ject, that the only route practicable for such a purpose is that *via* Lake Nicaragua, and its dependent waters. It has good harbors upon both coasts, and passes through a country remarkable for its salubrity, and capable of furnishing all the supplies which would be required by the commerce of the world, should it take this direction.

But although it has occupied so large a share of the attention of all maritime nations, and furnished a subject for innumerable essays in almost every language of Europe, it is astonishing that so little has actually been ascertained concerning it. The data upon which most writers have proceeded have been exceedingly vague, and have, in more than one instance, received an undue coloring from their prejudices. This renders it more important that a complete and accurate survey of the proposed route should speedily be made by competent engineers; not a simple reconnoissance on a single line, but a thorough examination of every line which may be thought feasible. And it is not less important that these surveys should be impartially made, in good faith, and not with the view of subserving the purposes of unscrupulous speculators, or of companies organized for the sale of stocks.

During my residence in Nicaragua, in accordance both with my duty and my inclination, I availed myself of every opportunity of procuring authentic information upon the subject of this communication, and personally visited most of the proposed lines across the Nicaraguan Isthmus. My information is necessarily general in its nature, for I had neither instruments nor assistants to enable me to get at mathematical data, upon which alone practical operations can be predicated. Until we shall have these, my observations, made on the spot, may not prove valueless.

The great problem connected with the subject of the proposed canal, and which has universally been esteemed as vital to the question of its feasibility, is this: *Is the great chain of*

the Cordilleras interrupted at any point upon the great Central Isthmus? To this question I am enabled to answer in the affirmative. Between the great Basin of Nicaragua, in which are the Lakes Managua and Nicaragua, and which is drained by the River San Juan, flowing into the Caribbean sea—that is to say, between the western extremity of Lake Managua and the Pacific, the Cordilleras are *wholly interrupted*, and we have only the great plains of Leon and Conejo, rising, for a distance of three thousand yards, to an elevation of about sixty feet above the lake, and two hundred above the sea, and thence subsiding, in a gentle slope, to the ocean. Between Lake Nicaragua and the Pacific, there is a narrow strip of land, not exceeding fourteen miles in width at its narrowest part; but it is traversed by an elevated ridge, which at the point deemed most favorable for the construction of a canal, has been found, by measurement, to rise to the height of several hundred feet above the ocean.

The starting point of the proposed canal, upon the Atlantic, for reasons which will be obvious enough by reference to the Map of Nicaragua, accompanying this book, must be at the Port of San Juan de Nicaragua. It is equally obvious that the projected work must pass up the valley of San Juan, to Lake Nicaragua. From this lake, however, various routes of communication with the Pacific have been suggested.

1st. By way of the River Sapoa, falling into Lake Nicaragua, to the Bay or Gulf of Bolaños or Salinas, on the Pacific.

2nd. By way of the Rio Lajas, falling into Lake Nicaragua, near the city of Rivas or Nicaragua, or some point in that vicinity, to the little harbor of Concordia, or San Juan del Sur, on the Pacific.

3d. By way of the Estero de Panaloya, extending from Lake Nicaragua to within four miles of the Lake of Managua, and through this lake to, 1st, the little port of Tamarinda on the Pacific; or, 2d, to the well-known port of Realejo; or, 3d,

via the Estero Real, to the magnificent Gulf or Bay of Fonseca.

I shall present, in a compendious manner, the facts of which I am in possession, in respect to those routes in the order above named.

RIVER AND PORT OF SAN JUAN.

The detailed and accurate "Map of the San Juan River" herewith presented, and the observations contained in the second and third chapters of the preceding narrative, preclude the necessity of any further extended references to the Port and River of San Juan. I shall, therefore, confine myself to a mere recapitulation of the facts therein embodied.

The position, form, size, and depth of the harbor are shown in the authentic map accompanying the survey of the river, which is reduced from one constructed by George Peacock, of H. B. M.'s ship Hyacinth, in 1832, subsequently corrected, and published under the order of the British Admiralty, in 1848. The San Juan River has several mouths, viz: the Colorado, the Taura, and the San Juan. The latter debouches, by several channels, into the harbor. The point of divergence is about fourteen miles distant from the port, and the whole intervening country is a low delta, or alluvion, interspersed with lagunas, and often partially covered with water, during the prevalence of heavy rains in the interior. The Colorado mouth carries off the greatest part of the water of the river, probably not much less than two thirds, and opens directly into the ocean. A bar, impassable for vessels of any considerable size, exists at its mouth. It is not supposed that, under any practicable system of improvements, this mouth could be used for commercial purposes, or as a means of entering the river.

It has been suggested that the channel of the Colorado was cut or enlarged by the Spaniards, under the Empire, to

prevent the ascent of hostile vessels; but the suggestion is simply absurd. The delta has existed very nearly in its present form and condition, without doubt, for many centuries. The loss of water by the Colorado has been calculated at 28,000 cubic yards per minute in the dry, and 86,000 per minute in the rainy season.

The Taura mouth is small; that opening into the harbor, and which bears the name of the river, is broad, but shallow, with a narrow channel, through which the little, native boats or bongos, which seldom draw more than three feet of water, often find it difficult, and sometimes impossible to pass. It is studded with low islands; and the depth varies from three to eight feet; bottom mud and sand, and channel constantly shifting.

From the point of divergence to the mouth of the Serapiqui, the current is regular, and the depth from six to thirty feet; average depth twelve feet. To the divergence of Juanillo, the banks are low, but beyond that point, they become from eight to twenty feet in height, firm and well-wooded. The San Juanillo has a narrow channel at its point of separation, but soon widens into a broad and deep lagoon, called the Laguna de San Juanillo. I was told that it has a depth of water ranging from two to six fathoms, and that with some improvements at its entrance and where it again joins the San Juan, it might probably be made navigable for small steamers, and obviate the difficulty now experienced in the navigation from the Colorado to the harbor.

The Rio Serapiqui is a large stream, rising at the foot of the great volcano of Cartago, in Costa Rica, and is navigable for canoes to a point called San Alfonso, a distance of twenty or twenty-five miles. At this point commences a mule path, "road" as it is sometimes called, which communicates with San Jose, the capital of Costa Rica.

It is thirteen miles from the Rio Serapiqui to the Rio San Carlos, which also rises at the base of the volcano of Cartago,

and may be ascended by bongos for from fifteen to twenty miles. The river is broad, with banks firm and well wooded, but not high, and has a depth of from six to thirty feet in the channel; average depth fourteen feet; current strong but even. From the Rio San Carlos to the Rapids of Machuca, also a distance of thirteen miles, the banks are high and studded with beautiful trees; the current regular, but the depth variable, ranging from six to forty feet in mid-channel; average depth twenty feet.

The Rapids of the Machuca are the longest, and in many respects the worst, on the river. They are not far from half a mile in length; the river here is spread over a wide, rocky, and crooked bed, with large rocks projecting above the surface of the stream, between which the water rushes with the greatest velocity. They are considered dangerous by the native boatmen, who are only enabled to ascend them by keeping close to the northern shore, where the current is least, and where the boat is pushed up by main force. It is often necessary to take out part of the load both in going up and coming down. Descending boats, in order to avoid this trouble, sometimes venture into the central, tortuous channels; but this is always perilous. The boat in which I descended the river, June 1850, attempted this course, but was jammed amongst the rocks, and had it not been new and strong, would inevitably have gone to pieces. We were detained in this dangerous position for thirty hours. The little steamer "Orus" sent out by Mr. Vanderbilt, in September of the same year, after having succeeded in entering the river by the Colorado mouth, was completely wrecked upon the rocks, at these Rapids. A smaller steamer, called the "Director," sent out by the same gentleman, was got past this point, at the expense of great labor and some weeks of time. It is very clear, that without some great artificial improvement, these Rapids will prove an insuperable obstacle to regular steam navigation on this river.

About three miles above the Machuca Rapids, are the Rapids of Mico and Los Valos, which however are close together, and may be regarded as one. Still above these are the Rapids of the Castillo. For the whole distance between the Machuca and the Castillo, the banks of the river are rocky; the bottom is also rough and rocky. The depth is very uneven, varying from five to twenty feet within the space of hardly as many rods. The current is rapid, and all upward navigation difficult.

The Rapids of the Castillo are the shortest of the series, and almost deserve the name of falls. Here considerable ridges come down to the river on either side. Upon the extreme point of that upon the south bank, is the old fort or castle of San Juan, now known as El Castillo Viejo. The rapids, without artificial modifications, would present nearly an insuperable obstacle to all kinds of navigation deserving the name. Bongos cannot ascend loaded; when they have cargoes, part has to be removed and carried past the falls. The boats are then *tracked*, or pushed up against the current, by main force. My bongo was upward of three hours in getting as many hundred yards.

Five miles above the Castillo are the Rapides del Toro. The banks are firm and high, and the soil seems well adapted for settlements. These rapids are about three fourths of a mile long. The water, of course, varies in depth with the different seasons of the year. At the time of my passage, it was, certainly for most of its extent, less than a fathom in depth. Bulow gives the current at 180 to 200 yards per minute, but I esteem it something more.

From the Rapides del Toro to Lake Nicaragua is a distance of twenty-four miles. The current for this distance is slight —according to Baron Bulow, not exceeding *one and a-half miles the hour*. The channel is wide, and the depth of the water from two to four fathoms; average thirteen feet. The banks are low, and the back country flat and swampy. Some

sluggish streams come in from both north and south, but they are almost hidden by the overhanging trees. At the head of the river, is the old fort of San Carlos.

The water of the lake opposite the fort and fronting the opening of the San Juan, is very shallow, not exceeding six or seven feet in depth for the distance of a mile and upward from the shore. Near this point the Rio Frio (Cold River) comes in from the south. It is a large stream, and is represented to have two fathoms water for a distance of forty miles from its mouth.

I have no hesitation in asserting that the San Juan never can be made navigable for ships of any considerable size. Small steamers, with some improvements in the channel, might be run without much difficulty; and this is *all* that can be hoped for from this stream.

In case it should be determined to open communication for ships across the continent at this point, it would be necessary to cut a canal at the base of the hills parallel to the stream, which might be made to yield, at the necessary intervals, the requisite supply of water. It is possible that the river might be used from the lake to the Toro Rapids, though even this is not certain. I am convinced that the ground rises not very far back from the river on the north, and that stone and all the materials necessary for the construction of a canal might be obtained, without difficulty, very nearly on the spot desired. These are things, however, which can only be determined from actual survey. A canal upon the southern bank, for reasons sufficiently obvious, from what has been presented above, is impracticable.

It has been conjectured by some that formerly the volume of water in the San Juan was much more considerable than it now is. This conjecture was doubtless founded on the circumstance of strong defences having been erected by the Spaniards, many years since, upon the banks both of the river and the lake, implying that it was an important channel of

communication, and upon the known fact that vessels denominated in early times "frigates" were accustomed to pass from the ocean to the lake and from the lake to the ocean. Indeed, it would seem that vessels sometimes sailed direct from Granada to the ports of Spain; but from the accounts of Gage, who visited Nicaragua about 1670, it appears that the task of passing "El Desaguadero," or the San Juan, was one of great difficulty and danger. He says: "For though while the vessels sail on the lake securely and without trouble, yet, when they fall from the lake to the sea, *hic labor, hoc opus est*—here is nothing but trouble, which sometimes makes that short voyage to last for *sixty days*; for such is the fall of the waters in many places among the rocks, that many times they are forced to unload the '*frigates*,' and load them again with the help of mules kept for that purpose by the few Indians who live about the river and have care of the lodges made to lay in the wares, while the frigate passes through dangerous places to another lodge, whither the wares are brought by mules and again placed in the frigate." These vessels, here called "frigates," were probably of small size, not exceeding eighty or a hundred tons burden. Vessels of this size may still, with extraordinary efforts, be taken up during high water in the river, as was shown in 1826, by Capt. Peter Shepherd, of San Juan, who took a schooner of fifty-two tons through the river by removing her keel and warping the whole distance. In this condition the vessel drew three feet six inches. The task was accomplished in thirty-two days. It may be observed here, upon the authority of Captain Shepherd, that this vessel, with her keel replaced and loaded, drew seven feet of water, and that *then*, in the dry season, she could not approach within two miles of San Carlos. Such being the fact, extensive works would be necessary to enable ships to pass from the lake into any canal which might be constructed.

This part of the line of the proposed canal, i. e., from the

Atlantic to Lake Nicaragua, has been hitherto passed over with very little remark, on the assumption, apparently, that here no difficulty existed, and that the river might readily be made to answer every desirable purpose. It will however be found to be the most difficult part of the whole enterprise; not less on account of the insufficiency of the river for ship navigation, than on account of the climate.

It should be observed, before dismissing this portion of the subject, that the rapids in the river are not formed by the simple aggregation of rocks, but by the interposition of beds of hornblendic and very solid rock, in their natural position, or uplifted by subterranean forces. Mr. Baily inclines to the opinion that these beds, or some of them, have been upheaved at a comparatively late period, by volcanic agency. Amongst the reasons which he gives for this opinion, is the following:

"In further corroboration of this hypothesis may be cited an incident that occurred in 1648, in which year a Spanish brigantine, from Carthagena de las Indias, arrived at Granada: after discharging her cargo and taking another on board, she started on her return voyage, but on proceeding down the river, it was found to be so obstructed at a certain point that the passage was impossible; she was consequently taken back to Granada, the cargo was relanded, and the vessel laid up at a place near by, called the Isletas, where, after lying some years, she was broken up. Protests and documents confirmatory of this fact are still existing in the municipal archives of the city. There is indeed no record extant of violent earthquake, nor extraordinary volcanic explosion, having happened at that period; yet the *possibility* of the event just supposed need not be rejected as purely imaginary, in the face of the historical evidences there are of the rising of Monte Nuevo, near Naples, in 1538; of Jorullo, in Mexico, in 1759; and some more modern instances; though certainly most of these are known to have been accompanied by earthquakes."

The following table will present the leading facts connected with the stream:

Stations.	Distances, including windings.	Greatest depth.	Least depth.	Average depth.	Bottom.	Banks.
	Miles.	Feet.	Feet.	Feet.		
From Port to divergence of Colorado, . .	14	8	3	6	sand and mud.	low.
" Colorado to Serapiqui . . .	9	30	6	12	"	medium.
" Serapiqui to Rio San Carlos . . .	13	36	6	13	"	"
" Rio San Carlos to Rapids of Machuca .	13	42	6	19	"	"
" Rapids of Machuca to Rapids del Toro .	15	24	5	10	rocky.	"
" Rapids del Toro to Lake . . .	24	24	8	13	mud.	low.
Total	88	42	3	12		

LAKE NICARAGUA.

According to Mr. Baily, the Lake of Nicaragua is about one hundred and five statute miles in greatest length, by forty-five in greatest breadth. I have elsewhere estimated it at about one hundred and twenty in length, by fifty or sixty in greatest breadth. "Near the shores," says Mr. Baily, "that is to say, at a distance of one hundred yards from the beach, there is generally a depth of two fathoms of water; in other parts, all the intermediate soundings, from five to fifteen fathoms, are found." Mr. A. G., quoted by Louis Napoleon, in his pamphlet on the subject, sounded forty-five fathoms (270 feet), in the middle of the lake. Upon the northern side of the lake, the water is comparatively shallow; it is also shallow near its outlet, and near the commencement of the Estero de Panaloya, at its head.

Its height above the ocean has been variously estimated; and the measurements which have been made do not entirely agree. According to Mr. Baily, and as the result of three

hundred and fifty-one levels, taken by him in 1838, between the port of San Juan del Sur, on the Pacific, and the mouth of the river Lajas, the level of the lake is 128 feet 3 inches above that of the Pacific. Assuming this to be correct, and that the result arrived at by Mr. Lloyd, and others, viz., that the Pacific, at low water, in the Bay of Panama, is six feet six inches lower than the Caribbean Sea at Chagres, is also correct, it follows that Lake Nicaragua is 121 feet 9 inches above the Atlantic. Galisteo, a Spanish Engineer, who investigated the subject in 1781, fixes the level of the lake at 134 feet above that of the Pacific; and the tables presented in Thompson's Guatemala make it 141 feet 8 inches. The level varies somewhat with the season of the year; this variation, Mr. Baily ascertained to be about six feet six inches.

The river San Juan, including its windings, is 88 miles in length; it has therefore a fall of a fraction more than 16 inches to the mile.

ROUTES BETWEEN LAKE NICARAGUA AND THE PACIFIC.

Via Rio Sapoa, on Lake Nicaragua, to the Bay of Bolaños, or Salinas, on the Pacific.

This route has been very recently suggested; and we have but little information concerning it. For what we have we are indebted to Dr. Andraes Oersted, of Copenhagen, who seems to have made a reconnaisance of it in 1848. I have in my possession an original map of the proposed line, made by him, and presented to me by Dr. F. V. Clark, lately resident in Costa Rica, of which a reduced copy and an explanatory section accompany the Map of the river San Juan.

It will be seen that the entire distance from the lake to the ocean is represented to be only thirteen and a half miles.

If this be correct, the isthmus is here narrower than at any other point. It is also claimed that the river Sapoa can be made navigable for half of this distance; and we are left to infer that it has a volume of water sufficiently great to supply the canal, from that point to the sea. But taking in view the length of the river, and the small space of country which it drains, this is hardly to be credited. If the fall of the river is truly represented in the section, it cannot be less than sixty feet in six miles; in order, therefore to be made navigable for that distance, it will require locks, and other improvements, of the extent and nature of which we have no means of judging.

The greatest height of land, or the summit level, on this line is set down at 258 feet above the Pacific (i. e., 129 feet 9 inches above the lake) and not far from 70 feet above the highest point of navigation on the Sapoa, when that river shall have been improved as above suggested.

The Bay of Salinas, the proposed Pacific terminus of the canal, on this line, is a very fine one, and much better adapted for commercial purposes than any other to the northward, short of Realejo. The State of Costa Rica, which has set up some pretensions to sovereignty over this part of Nicaragua, in 1848 made a grant of this line to an English company. But by a letter from the British Vice Consul in Nicaragua to Lord Palmerston, written in 1848, it appears that the examination of the line, in that year, proved it to be impracticable.

Line from the mouth of Rio Lajas, on Lake Nicaragua, to the Port of San Juan Del Sur, on the Pacific.

This is the line to which public attention has been oftenest directed, and upon which nearly all practical operations have hitherto been conducted. It was surveyed in 1781, under

order of the Spanish Government, by Don Manual Galisteo; and subsequently by some other engineer, in the service of Spain, the results of whose measurements are published in the Appendix to Thompson's Guatemala. In 1838 it was again surveyed by Mr. John Baily, under the direction of the Federal Government of Central America. These various surveys were not on precisely the same line; although there can be no doubt that they all terminated at the little port of San Juan del Sur, on the Pacific. They show that a high, broad ridge of land intervenes between the lake and ocean. The height of this ridge is variable; but after riding in person along the greatest part of its length, I am satisfied that it is unbroken.[1]

The following table shows some of the results of the surveys on this line, by the engineers above referred to:

Authorities.	Distance from Lake to Ocean.		Greatest Elevation above Ocean.	Greatest Elevation above Lake.
	Miles.	Feet.	Feet.	Feet.
Galisteo	17	200	272	134
Quoted by Thompson .	17	330	296	154
Baily	16	730	615	487

The distance, according to Mr. Baily's survey, is 28,409 yards; of which 14,420 yards are on or below the level of the lake, viz: 8,960 below, and 5,460 on the same level, the latter being the extent to which it is calculated the river Lajas might be used. The average altitude above the lake for the

[1] It will be time enough to credit the report which has recently been set afloat, that a passage has been discovered, "which is only twelve miles in length, and requires but forty-eight feet of vertical cutting, to cause the waters of the lake to mingle with those of the ocean," when we shall have the facts and figures presented by competent engineers; when, in short, it is demonstrated.

remaining distance, 13,989 yards, is 179 feet. According to the table given by Thompson, a section of 14,700 yards of the line is above the level of the lake, and has an average altitude of 78 feet. Assuming that the supply of water to feed the proposed canal must be drawn from the lake, the vertical excavation necessary to its construction, allowing thirty feet for its depth, would be as follows:—

Baily's Line	13,989 yards, of 209 feet average vertical cutting. 14,420 " " 30 " " "
Other Line	14,700 yards, of 108 feet average vertical cutting. 14,330 " " 30 " " "

These figures utterly preclude the idea, not the possibility, (for who shall say what is impossible?) of constructing the proposed work on either of these lines of survey. The two greatest canals in the world, designed for the passage of large vessels, are the Caledonian Canal in Scotland, and that in Holland from Amsterdam to Niewdiep. The first of these is 21½ miles long, is 20 feet deep, 50 feet wide at bottom, and 122 feet wide at the top. It has a lockage of one hundred and ninety feet, and is capable of passing frigates of thirty-two guns, and merchant vessels of a thousand tons. It cost, in round numbers, $5,000,000. The second has no locks, being a tide canal, is 50 miles long, 20 feet 9 inches deep, 36 feet wide at bottom, and 124 at the top. It cost twelve millions of guilders, or a little more than the Caledonian Canal. I have already said that no canal except one capable of passing the largest ships from one ocean to the other, could adequately meet the requirements of commerce and the age. The proposed canal must then be of larger dimensions than that of Scotland or Holland. Admitting, for the sake of instituting comparisons, that a canal 30 feet deep, 50 feet wide at the bottom, and 150 at the top, would fully answer to these con-

ditions, we have the following comparative results, in respect to the amount of excavation:

Caledonian Canal	183,902,400	cubic feet
Holland "	422,400,000	" "
Proposed Canal, on Baily's line . . .	4,927,577,800	" "

That is to say, apart from any other portions of the proposed line, the single section from Lake Nicaragua to the Pacific, would require more than *ten times* the amount of excavation performed in constructing the Holland Canal, and fifty times that of the Caledonian Canal, which, from the nature of the ground overcome, locks, etc., affords the best standard of calculation. At the same ratio of expense, this section alone would cost $250,000,000!

An open-cut canal, therefore, from Lake Nicaragua to the Pacific, to be supplied with water from the lake, on any line hitherto surveyed, is impracticable,—if on no other ground, certainly on that of cost. It has been proposed to avoid or obviate this objection, by the construction of a tunnel for part of the distance, where the height of land is greatest. But any canal designed for the passage of large ships, which requires the construction of a tunnel, of any considerable length, is *prima facie*, impracticable. In the particular instance before us, if the open cuttings were carried, upon either side of the summit, until they became 90 feet deep, yet there would still remain 5888 yards, or upwards of three miles, of tunneling to be accomplished. But neither Mr. Baily, nor the most daring of those who have made this suggestion, have ventured to propose a tunnel of this length. They have suggested a tunnel commencing at an elevation of 122 feet above the lake, which would reduce its length to a trifle over a mile, but increase the vertical lockage from 128 to 372 feet. The fatal objection to this plan, however, is the lack of water to supply the upper levels, and to lock

down vessels, both to the lake and ocean. Mr. Baily suggests the collection of the waters of the little streams and rivulets, rising on this narrow isthmus, and the "*sinking of Artesian wells*" to furnish the requisite supply! I have no hesitation in saying, after passing over these heights, that the whole amount of water which it would be possible to collect from these sources, would not supply the simple *leakage*, to say nothing of the evaporation, of a canal of the kind required.

These few stubborn facts, unless some more favorable line shall be discovered, must settle the question, so far as regards a canal across the narrow isthmus intervening directly between Lake Nicaragua and the ocean. For although here appears to be the natural and most obvious route for the work, yet its practicability must be tested by the same standards which regulate the construction of all works of improvement and public utility.

It is proper to add that, in constructing the canal, Mr. Baily proposed to make use of what is called the river Lajas, which falls into the lake a few miles below the city of Rivas, for a distance of 5,460 yards from its mouth. For this distance, he states that it has a breadth of from thirty to one hundred yards, and a depth of from six to eighteen feet; bottom mud, and rock from nine to twenty-eight feet beneath.

But no one should be deceived by the use of the term "Rio," as applied in Spanish America; for it may mean anything from a rill upwards. The misapprehension of this term, and of *monte*, which signifies generally forest, or uncultivated land, has led to great errors by map-makers and others, deriving their information from the Spanish authorities. Thus, between Leon and Realejo, there is a forest called *Monte de San Juan*, and certain writers have therefore inferred that a mountain intervenes between the two places; while, in fact, the whole country is a dead plain. The Rio Lajas is a running stream for only a part of the year. During the dry season it is simply a long, narrow lagoon, of sluggish

Lethean water, without current, and the bar at its mouth is dry, cutting off all connection with the lake. The lake along this part of the coast is very shallow, the bottom rock.

MOUTH OF THE RIO LAJAS. VOLCANO OF OMETEPEC.

In respect to the port of San Juan del Sur, or Concordia, the same author observes that it is small; entrance 1,100 yards across, between promontories from 400 to 500 feet high; land sandy and low at its head; depth, 200 yards from shore, two fathoms, increasing to ten fathoms, which is the depth at the entrance; rise of tide ten to fourteen feet. A mile to the northward is another little port, called Nacascolo, or Brito, of nearly the same size and figure. Between the two the land is low; and Mr. Baily suggests that they might be connected by a cut, and one used as a port of entrance, the other as a port of exit. But neither of these is an adequate terminus for a work like the proposed canal, and under the best of circumstances, and even for purposes of transit, both would require artificial improvements.

There is one grand objection to this port, as also to all others which are found on the coast of the Pacific, parallel to

Lake Nicaragua, viz., the character of the prevailing winds. These are called *Papagayos*, literally, *parrots*, probably from the crooked bill of that bird, which illustrates their revolving direction. They render approach to this portion of the coast extremely difficult. They prevail from Punta Desolada on the north, to Cape Velas on the south, a distance of not far from two hundred miles, and are supposed to be caused by the north-east trades, which, as I have said, sweep entirely across the continent and Lake Nicaragua, and encounter other atmospheric currents on the Pacific. These trades are strongly felt, blowing off the shore, for a distance of fifteen or twenty miles, beyond which the conflicting or revolving winds, or Papagayos, commence.[1]

CONNECTION BETWEEN LAKE NICARAGUA AND LAKE MANAGUA.

It is not known that any other direct routes for a canal between Lake Nicaragua and the Pacific have been suggested. These present what appear to be insuperable difficulties. But it has been claimed that, from the superior lake of the great terrestrial basin of Nicaragua, Lake Managua or Leon, a route can be found to good ports on the Pacific, free from the difficulties and objections surrounding those already noticed. The first consideration, therefore, relates to the connection between the two lakes.

Upon this point much confusion and misapprehension exist, which have, to a certain extent, been set right and corrected in Chapter XV. of the preceding "Narrative," to which the reader is referred. Between Lake Nicaragua and Lake Managua is about sixteen miles. For twelve miles of this distance extends the Estero de Panaloya, which is a broad, shallow arm of Lake Nicaragua, ranging from six to

[1] Sir Edward Belcher's Voyage round the World, vol. i., p. 185.

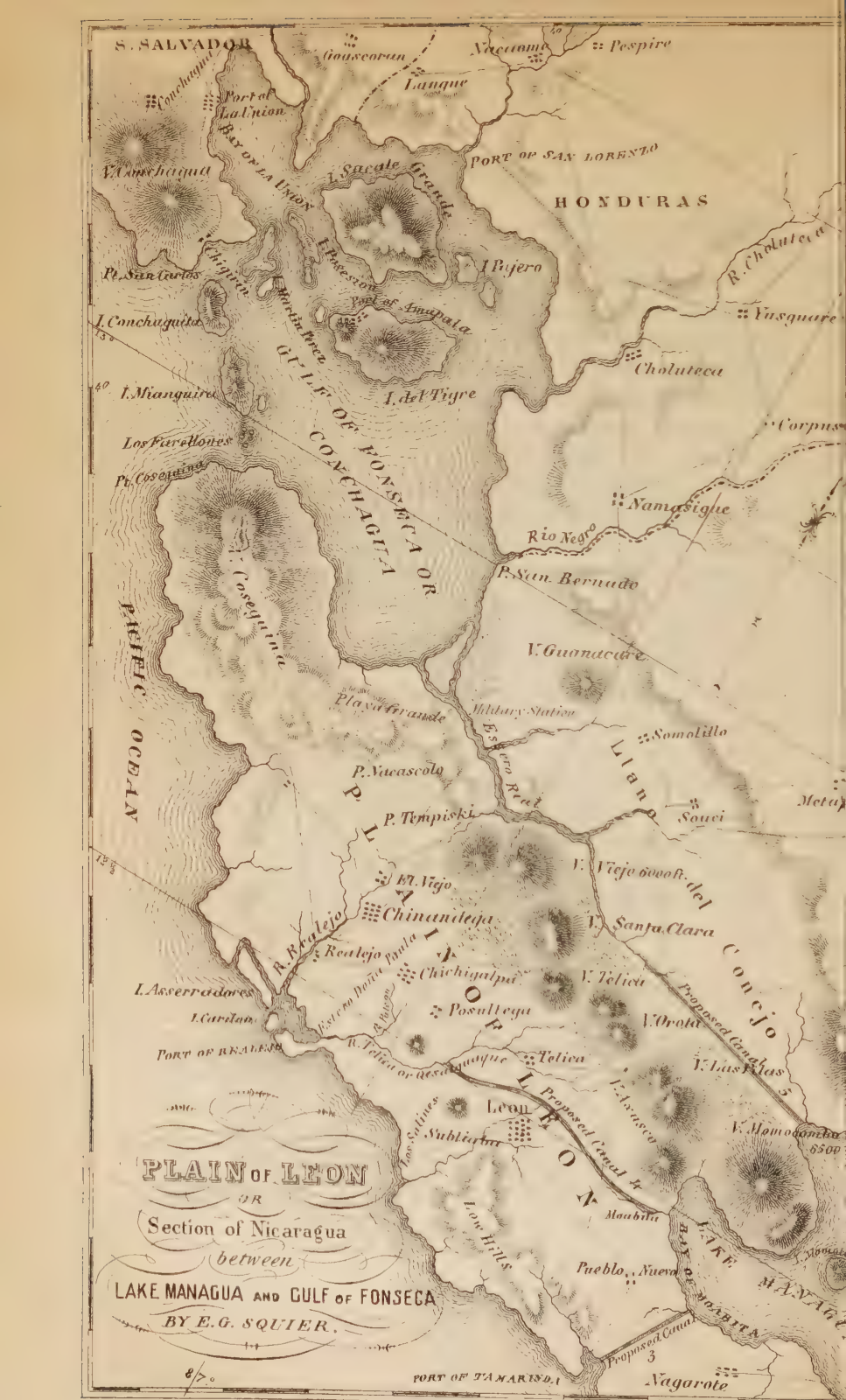
fifteen feet in depth, with low banks, and for most of the way, a muddy bottom. This estero is really part of Lake Nicaragua, and the true distance between the lakes is therefore only about four miles.

The estate of Pasquiel, at the head of this estuary, is the limit of navigation. Above, for a mile and a half, to "Paso Chico," the bed of the river is full of large and isolated rocks, resting upon a bed of rock which seems to be calcareous breccia, but, singularly enough, intermixed with fragments of *lava*, as well as various granite stones, jasper, and other materials. Beyond "Paso Chico," the bed, or rather the former bed of the river, (for there is now no water here except what flows from springs, or is deposited in large pools in the depressions of the rock by the rains,) is the same solid breccia, worn into basins and fantastic "pot-holes" by the water. Within one mile of the Lake of Managua is the fall of Tipitapa, opposite the little village of that name. It is a ledge of the same rock above described, and is from twelve to fifteen feet in height. The former bed of the stream is here not less than 400 feet in width. From the falls to the lake, the ancient bed is wide but shallow, and is now covered with grass and bushes, resembling a neglected pasture. At the time of my visit no water flowed through it, nor, so far as I could learn, had any flowed there for years. I can, however, readily believe that in an extremely wet season a small quantity may find its way through this channel, and over the falls. It is, nevertheless, very evident that no considerable body of water ever passed here. There is an arm of the lake which projects down the old bed for three or four hundred yards, but the water is only two or three feet deep, with an equal depth of soft, gray mud, the dwelling-place of numerous alligators, with reedy shores, thronged with every variety of water-birds. The water of Lake Managua, near the so-called outlet, is not deep, and the channel, in order to admit of the passage of large vessels,

would probably require to be well dredged, if not protected by parallel piers. At the distance of about three-fourths of a mile from the shore, I found, by actual measurement, that the water did not exceed two fathoms in depth. No great obstruction to building the proposed canal exists in the section between the two lakes. The rock is so soft and friable that a channel can easily be opened from Lake Managua to the falls. Beyond this the banks are high for three miles, forming a natural canal which only needs to be properly dammed, at its lower extremity, to furnish a body of water adequate to every purpose of navigation. Locks would then be required to reach the estuary of Panaloya. From this point to the lake, I conceive, may prove the most difficult part of this section, although apparently the easiest. Where the bottom is earth or mud, the desirable depth of water may be secured by dredging; but where it is rock, as it certainly is near its upper extremity, some difficult excavation will be required. The banks downward are so low as to prohibit assistance from dams, except by diking the shores.

The Tipitapa is bordered by low and slightly undulating, but very rich and beautiful lands, interspersed with glades, and chiefly occupied for cattle estates. Abundance of Brazil wood grows here, and large quantities are annually shipped in bongos from Pasquiel for the port of San Juan, passing thence to all parts of the world, but chiefly to the United States.

Lake Managua may thus be said virtually to have no outlet. The streams which come in from the Pacific side are insignificant; and though, as already stated, the Rio Grande and other streams of considerable size flow into it from the direction of Segovia, yet they vary much with the season of the year, and seldom furnish a greater quantity of water than is requisite to supply the evaporation from so large a surface, in a tropical climate. Nevertheless, a reservoir like that of Managua, with 1,200 square miles of surface,



PLAIN OF LEON
OR
Section of Nicaragua
between
LAKE MANAGUA AND GULF OF FONSECA
BY E. G. SQUIER.

Face Vol. II, P. 239.

LITH. OF SARONY, D. MAYER, NEW

would be adequate to supply all the water required for a ship canal at this point, without any sensible diminution of its volume. The winds on the lake blow freshly from the north-east during the afternoon and evening, and subside towards morning, causing an ebb and flow, in its results corresponding with that produced by the tides of the ocean; hence the vulgar error of a subterranean communication with the sea.

SECTIONS BETWEEN LAKE MANAGUA AND THE PACIFIC.

The country between Lake Managua and the Pacific is much more favorable for the construction of a canal than that between Lake Nicaragua and the same ocean. The dividing ridge, to which I have alluded, as separating the waters of the latter lake from the sea, also extends along the intervening isthmus, until very nearly to the head of Lake Managua. Here it is wholly interrupted, or rather subsides into broad plains, rising but a few feet above the lake, and thence descending in a gentle slope to the ocean. Three lines across these plains have been suggested; 1st, by the left shore of the lake to the small port of the Tamarinda; 2d, by the same shore to the well known port of Realejo; and 3d, by the upper shore of the lake to the Gulf of Fonseca, or Conchagua. It is probable that all of these lines are feasible, but a minute survey can only determine which is best.

Tamarinda Line.

The first line suggested, that to the port of the Tamarinda, is considerably shorter than either of the others, not exceeding fifteen or eighteen miles in length. But the water of the lake upon its north-western shore, in the bay of Moabita, is shallow. In company with Dr. Livingston, U. S. Consul,

I sounded it in July 1849. It deepened regularly from the shore to the distance of one mile, when it attained five fathoms. After that it deepened rapidly to ten and fifteen fathoms. The country between the lake and El Tamarinda, so far as can be ascertained, it being covered with forests, is level, and offers no insuperable obstacle to a canal. There is no town or village near the port, and it seems to have escaped general notice. Nor is it known that it has ever been entered by vessels, except in one or two instances for the purpose of loading Brazil wood. It is small, and tolerably well protected; but is not a proper termination for a work like the proposed canal.

Realejo Line.

The second line is that to the well known and excellent port of Realejo, formed by the junction of the Telica or Doña Paula and Realejo rivers, and protected on the side of the sea by the islands of Cardon and Asserradores, and a bluff of the main-land. It is safe and commodious, and the water is good, ranging from three and four to eight and nine fathoms. The volcano of El Viejo, lifting its cone upwards of 6,000 feet above the sea, to the north-eastward of the port, forms an unmistakable landmark for the mariner, long before any other part of the coast is visible. This line, starting from the nearest practicable point of Lake Managua, cannot fall short of forty-five miles in length. It is said that the Estero of Doña Paula, which is truly only that part of the Telica river up which the tide flows, might be made use of for a considerable distance; but that can only be determined by actual survey. I can discover no reason why this route could not be advantageously pursued. It has the present advantage of passing through the most populous and best cultivated part of the country, and terminating at a point already well known. There is no stream upon this line

which, as has been supposed by Louis Napoleon and some other writers on this subject, can be made available for supplying this section of the proposed canal with water. The "Rio Tosta," of which they speak, (by which, from its described position, it is supposed the *Rio Telica* is meant, for no stream known as the Rio Tosta exists,) was formerly a stream of some size, but never furnished a quantity of water sufficient to supply an ordinary canal. The local geography of the plain of Leon is little known to its inhabitants; and, as the roads are hemmed in by impenetrable forests, it is impossible for the traveller to inform himself of the minor topographical features of the country. The Rio Telica empties into the Estero Doña Paula, and it may possibly be made to answer a useful purpose. I have crossed it at many points where it has (as it has for nearly its entire length) the character of a huge natural canal, from sixty to eighty feet deep by perhaps one hundred and fifty or two hundred yards wide at the top, with steep banks, for the most part of a friable substratum of rock or compact earth. And as, at its source, it is not more than fifteen miles distant from Lake Managua, it is not improbable that, by proper cuttings, the waters of the lake might be brought into it, and, after the necessary level is attained, the bed of the stream might be used from that point to the sea, securing the necessary depth of water by locks or dams. If this suggestion is well founded, the principal part of the estimated excavation of this section of the canal may be avoided. In any event, the cutting would not, with the aids furnished by this mechanical age, be an object to deter the engineer.

Every traveller who has passed over the plain of Leon, concurs in representing that the range of hills separating Lake Nicaragua from the Pacific are here wholly interrupted; and I can add my unqualified testimony in support of the fact. The city of Leon is situated in the midst of this plain, midway between the lake and sea; and, from the flat

roof of its cathedral, the traveller may see the Pacific; and, were it not for the intervening forests, probably the lake. Mr. A. G., quoted by Louis Napoleon, and whose observations are uniformly very accurate, states that the ground, between lake and ocean, at a distance of 2,725 yards from the former, attains its maximum height of 55 feet 6 inches, and from thence slopes to the sea. Other observers vary in their estimates of this maximum elevation, from 49 feet 6 inches to 51 feet. Of course, the precise elevation can only be determined by actual survey. The city of Leon is distant, in a direct line, about fifteen or eighteen miles from the lake. Captain Belcher determined its height, above the Pacific, to be 140 feet;[1] which, deducted from the height of the lake, 156 feet, shows that the plain, where it is built, is 16 feet below the level of the lake.

It is probable that the deepest cutting on this line, allowing thirty feet for the depth of the proposed canal, would not exceed eighty feet, and this only for a short distance. We have examples of much more serious undertakings of this character. In the canal from Arles to Boue the table-land Lèque has been cut through to the extent of 2,289 yards, the extreme depth being from 130 to 162 feet. I need hardly add that the Lake of Managua must supply the water requisite for the use of the canal, from its shores to the sea, as there are no reservoirs or streams of magnitude upon this line.

Lake Managua to the Gulf or Bay of Fonseca.

There is still another route, to which public attention has never been generally directed, but which, if feasible, of which I have no doubt, offers greater advantages than either of the others just named, viz., from the northern point of Lake Managua *via* the Estero Real to the Gulf of Fonseca or Conchagua. The upper part of Lake Managua is divided into two large bays by a vast promontory or peninsula, at the ex-

[1] Voyage Round the World, vol. i. p. 166.

treme point of which stands the giant volcano of Momotombo. Between this volcano and that of the Viejo, to the north-east of Realejo, running nearly east and west, is a chain of volcanoes, presenting, probably, in a short distance, a greater number of extinct craters, and more evidences of volcanic action, than any other equal extent of the continent. This chain is isolated. Upon the south is the magnificent plain of Leon, bounded only by the sea; and upon the north is also another great plain, the "*Llano del Conejo*," bounded by the auriferous hills of Segovia. This plain extends from the northern bay of Lake Managua to the Gulf Conchagua, which is equalled only by that of San Francisco, and may be described as a grand harbor, in which all the vessels of the world might ride in entire security. It much resembles that of San Francisco in position and form; the entrance from the sea is, however, broader. Its entire length within the land is not far from seventy miles, and its breadth forty miles. The three States of San Salvador, Nicaragua, and Honduras, have ports upon it. In respect to trade, the principal port on the main-land is that of La Union, in San Salvador. All the adjacent coasts are of unbounded fertility, and possess an unlimited supply of timber. The sides of the mountains, particularly of the volcano of San Miguel, are covered with oak and pine, suitable for building and repairing ships. Coal is said to occur about sixty miles from the port of La Union, on the banks of the Rio Lempa, the roads to the beds leading through a level country. The Bay embraces several islands of considerable size and beauty, surrounded by water, of such depth as to enable vessels of the largest class to approach close in-shore. The most important of these, from the circumstance of its size, and the fact that it commands and is the key to the entire Bay, is the island of Tigre, belonging to Honduras. This island was the headquarters and dépôt of Drake, and other piratical adventurers, during their operations in the South Sea. It is about

twenty miles in circumference, level near the shore, but rising regularly and gradually to a cone in the centre; thus affording almost every variety of air and climate desirable. Upon this island is situated the free port of Amapala, recently established, where there are a few storehouses and dwellings. The rest of the island is almost wholly uninhabited. The possession of this island, and consequent control of the Gulf of Fonseca, by any great maritime power, would enable it to exercise a command over the commerce of the western part of the continent, like that which the possession of Gibraltar by the English, gives them to exercise over that of Europe.

From the southern extremity of the Gulf of Fonseca, extends a large estuary, or arm, called el Estero Real. Its course is precisely in the direction of the Lake of Managua; which it approaches to within fifteen or twenty miles, and between it and the lake is the Plain of Conejo, which is, in fact, a part of the Plain of Leon. This Estero is as broad as the East River at New York, and has, for most of its extent, an ample depth of water. At thirty miles above the Bay it has fifty feet. There is a narrow bar at its mouth, upon which, at low tide, there are but about three fathoms. The tide rises, however, nearly ten feet; and with artificial aid the bar could, doubtless, be passed at all times. This Estero is one of the most beautiful natural channels that can be imagined; preserving, for a long distance, a very nearly uniform width of from three hundred to four hundred yards. Its banks are lined with mangroves, with a dense background of other trees.

Capt. Belcher, who was here in 1838, went thirty miles up the Estero, in a vessel drawing ten feet of water. He says: "To-day we started with the Starling, and other boats, to explore the Estero Real, which, I had been given to understand, was navigable for sixty miles; in which case, from what I saw of its course in my visit to the Viejo, it must nearly communicate with the Lake of Managua. After con-

siderable labor, we succeeded in carrying the Starling thirty miles from its mouth, and might easily have gone farther, had the wind permitted, but the prevailing strong winds rendered the toil of towing too heavy. We ascended a small hill, about a mile below our extreme position, from which angles were taken to all the commanding peaks. From that survey, added to what I remarked from the summit of the Viejo, I am satisfied that the stream could be followed many miles farther; and, I have not the slightest doubt, it is fed very near the Lake Managua. I saw the mountains *beyond* the lake on its eastern side, and *no land higher than the intervening trees occurred.* This, therefore, would be the most advantageous line for a canal, which, by entire lake navigation, might be connected with the interior of the States of San Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and extend to the Atlantic. Thirty navigable miles for vessels drawing ten feet we can vouch for, and the natives and residents assert *sixty* (*thirty?*) more!"

From the course of the Estero, and the distance it is known to extend, it probably would not require a canal of more than twenty miles in length to connect its navigable waters with those of Lake Managua; in which case there would be a saving over the Realejo line, besides having the western terminus of the great work in the magnificent Bay which I have just described, where every facility is afforded for victualling, repairing, etc., and where a local trade of vast importance, in sugar, cotton, indigo, cacao, and coffee, would soon spring up.

It may, therefore, be safely asserted that a passage from the Lake of Managua to the sea is entirely feasible, and it only remains to determine which of the routes here indicated offers the greatest advantages. In case the canal is ever made, I am convinced that this will be the route. My own observations, made from the volcano of Las Pilas, overlooking the "Llano del Conejo," as well as the concurrent reports

of the natives, have satisfied me that this plain is lower than that of Leon, and that the excavation on this line would be less than on that to Realejo.

RECAPITULATION.

The subjoined table exhibits the estimated distances from sea to sea, on the various lines already described, as also the probable extent of actual canalization. It is assumed, throughout, that the River San Juan cannot be made navigable for ships, and that a lateral canal must be made, for its entire length. The length of the river, including its windings, is nearly ninety miles; but it is probable that the distance, in a right line, between the lake and the Atlantic does not exceed seventy miles.

Routes from the Port of San Juan to the Pacific.	Length of Rio San Juan.	Distance on Lake Nicaragua.	From Lake Nicaragua to Pacific.	Between Lakes Nicaragua and Managua.	Distance on Lake Managua.	Between Lake Managua and Pacific.	Actual Canalization.	Total Length.
To Bay of Salinas, .	70	50	13	—	—	—	83	133
" San Juan del Sur,	70	60	16	—	—	—	86	146
" Tamarinda, . .	70	110	—	4	50	16	90	250
" Realejo, ...	70	110	—	4	50	45	119	279
" Estero Real, . .	70	110	—	4	50	20	194	254

The length of the proposed line of communication from San Juan to Realejo is estimated by Louis Napoleon at 278 miles, as follows: Length of the San Juan, 104 miles; of Lake Nicaragua, 90 miles; River Tipitapa, 20 miles; Lake Leon, or Managua, 35 miles; and distance from the Lake to Realejo, 29 miles. This is positively erroneous in some particulars; as, for instance, the distance from Lake Managua to

Realejo, which, so far from being only 29 miles, is actually from 40 to 45 miles.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

It is useless to enter into calculations respecting the proper size, and respecting the cost of such a work, as the proposed canal. Its dimensions, in order to make it fully answer the purpose of its construction, must be sufficiently great to admit the easy passage of the largest vessels. Its cost, until there is a detailed survey of the entire line, must be entirely a matter of conjecture. It has been variously estimated at from six to twenty-five and thirty millions of dollars. Assume it to cost $100,000,000, which may be as near the truth as any other calculation; still it is enough to know that it is topographically *possible*, and that its benefits, immediate and prospective, will be sufficient to compensate for the expenditure of double that amount, startling as it may at first appear.

But there are other circumstances, besides the actual topographical features of the country, which must be taken in view, in estimating the feasibility, or rather the practicability, of a grand work like the proposed canal. The means of sustenance, climate, ability of procuring and applying labor, etc., must all be considered.

In respect to climate I need not add anything to the observations, on that subject, contained in the Introduction to this work. It cannot be doubted that the surveys, excavations, etc., on the San Juan will not only prove the most difficult of any section of the proposed canal, but, from the nature of things, be attended with greater injury to the health of those engaged there. The forests which line that river are dense and dank; and the removal of the trees and other vegetation, and the consequent exposure of the rich earth—the accumulated vegetable deposit of ages—to the sun, would prove a

prolific source of fevers and kindred diseases. The evil consequences could only be arrested by employing here, as elsewhere, the natives of this latitude, inured to labor and hardened to exposure. In fact, the principal reliance throughout must be upon this kind of laborers, who, for *two reals* (25 cents) per day (the standard price), would flock in great, if not all desirable numbers, from all the States of Central America. For a *medio* (6¼ cents) per day, each man provides his own support, without further cost to his employer. The laboring population is eminently docile, and can soon be brought to perform any kind of simple labor, as excavating, clearing, quarrying, burning lime, etc., in a satisfactory manner. In a country where there are so many festival days, it would be necessary to keep them a little in arrears, or possess some means of enforcing strict compliance with their contracts, to secure their constant attention to their work. This matter of labor, however, is a point upon which it is necessary, after the experience of the Panama Railroad Company, to speak with caution. It is one which, after a complete survey of the country by competent engineers, should claim the first attention of the Company or Government which shall seriously undertake the construction of the projected canal.

The following are the remarks made by Mr. Baily upon the matters here adverted to; and, coming from a man who has had some experience in field operations upon the line of the proposed work, they are entitled to consideration.

"In executing so stupendous an undertaking, salubrity of climate, and the means of feeding abundantly and economically so large a body of workmen as would be collected, are subjects which cannot be passed over without notice. With regard to the first, the writer can aver that, during four months that he was occupied between the Pacific and the Lake of Granada, with a party of forty individuals, there was not a man prevented by sickness from performing his daily labor, although continually sleeping at night in the

open air. On the lake, and in the river San Juan, with a large party, the men maintained their health well, although exposed to frequent rains in the latter. But when at the port (del Norte,) or near to it, sickness got among them, which was mainly attributable to the use, or rather abuse, of ardent spirits, and other excesses so frequently indulged in at such places. This change, however, is not assignable solely to indulgence in excesses, because San Juan is exposed to all the dangerous influences of climate and temperature peculiar to the Mosquito shore, and all the coast from Cape Gracias á Dios to Carthagena, beyond it.

"The population from the State of Nicaragua may be said not to extend south much beyond the environs of the town of Nicaragua, so that the line of survey, approaching it in no part nearer than four leagues, passed over a comparative wilderness, and consequently all provisions were supplied from that place. These are always to be had in abundance; and should circumstances require it, they could be drawn from other parts of the State to almost any extent. The principal articles of consumption are meat (beef), maize, frijoles, rice, plantains, and fruits, which can be furnished at moderate prices; as, for example, meat at $3\frac{1}{2}$, 4 or $4\frac{1}{2}$ reals the arroba of 25 pounds; (the real is equal to sixpence of English money;) maize varying according to seasons, 6, 8, or 10, seldom 12 reals, per fanega, which weighs about 300 pounds; frijoles and rice in similar proportions; plantains, which are universally used, especially by the laboring classes, are so plentiful that a mule-load of them, (two or three quintals,) can be had, throughout the year, for 2 or $2\frac{1}{2}$ reals; so that if a large number of workmen were to be collected in this direction, there would be found no difficulty in supplying them with all the ordinary necessaries of life.

"The price paid for labor during the survey was $\$7\frac{1}{2}$ per man per month, besides provisions, which, on an average, amounted to half a real a-day; but this was higher than

what was usually given for general field work, in consideration of the men being taken to a distance from their families, for an indefinite time. For work such as that in question, good native artisans would be scarce; but there would be no want of laboring hands, for the certainty and regularity of their pay would attract men not only from all parts of this, but from the adjoining States of Costa Rica, Honduras, and San Salvador also; while a judicious system of equitable regulations would insure their docility and submissiveness. The barbarism that has been attributed to this population, in the writings before alluded to, needs no other refutation than saying that the imputation is unfounded; nor is it, nor can it be, a supposable fact that the peasantry of one country should differ very much from that of the other adjoining it—the same language, habits, and customs being common to both."

CHAPTER II.

HISTORICAL OUTLINE OF NEGOTIATIONS IN RESPECT TO THE PROPOSED CANAL.

In the preceding chapter I have considered solely the question of the practicability of the projected interoceanic canal. The results, as affecting the commercial and political relations and interests of the United States, next claim attention. Before proceeding to their consideration, however, it will be interesting to notice, briefly, some of the measures which have heretofore been taken towards the construction of the proposed work.

Although its feasibility was asserted early in the 16th century, nothing was practically attempted until late in the 18th century, when the attention of the Spanish Government was called to the subject once more by Godoy, "the Prince of Peace," and a survey of the route was made under his direction. The documents relating to it still exist in the archives of Guatemala. After the independence of Central America, another attempt toward the accomplishment of the same object was made by Señor Manual Antonio de la Cerda, afterwards Governor of the State of Nicaragua, who, in July 1823, urged the matter upon the Federal Congress, but failed in accomplishing anything at that time.

During the year 1824, however, various propositions were made from abroad, in respect to the enterprise. Amongst these was one from Messrs. Barclay & Co., of London, bearing date Sept. 18, 1824. They proposed to open a navigable communication between the two oceans, *via* the River San

Juan and Lake Nicaragua, without cost to the Government, provided the latter would extend the requisite assistance in other modes. On the 2d of Feb., 1825, other propositions were made, by some merchants of the United States, signed by Col. Chas. Bourke and Matthew Llanos, in which they observe that they had, in the month of December preceding, (1824), sent an armed brig to San Juan, having on board engineers and other persons charged to make a survey of the proposed route. They prayed, in consideration of the advances already made, and the evidences of good faith thus exhibited, that the Government would grant them, 1st, an exclusive proprietorship and control of the canal; 2d, an exclusive right of navigating the lakes and dependent waters by steam; 3d, free permission to use all natural products of the country, necessary for the work; 4th, exemption of duty on goods introduced by the Company, until the completion of the work. In return for this, they proposed that the Government should receive twenty per cent. on the tolls, and at the end of the term of ——— years, to surrender the entire work to the Government. Whether the armed brig, and the party of engineers referred to by these parties, ever reached their destination is unknown; nor is it known that the Government of Central America ever took any specific notice of these propositions.

The subject was nevertheless regarded as of primary interest throughout all Central America, and the Minister of that Republic in the United States, Señor Don Antonio Jose Cañas, was specially instructed to bring the matter prominently before the American Government. This he did in an official letter, bearing date Feb. 8, 1825, addressed to Henry Clay, then Secretary of State. In this letter, Sr. Cañas solicited the coöperation of the United States, on the ground "that its noble conduct had been a model and a protection to all the Americas," and entitled it to a preference over any other nation, both in the "merits and advantages of the

proposed great undertaking." He proposed also, by means of a treaty, "effectually to secure its advantages to the two nations." The Charge d' Affaires of the United States in Central America, Col. John Williams, was accordingly specially instructed to assure the Government of that country of the deep interest taken by the United States in an undertaking "so highly calculated to diffuse a favorable influence on the affairs of mankind," to investigate with the greatest care the facilities offered by the route, and to remit the information to the United States. But it appears no information of the character required ever reached the American Government.

During this year, however, (1825,) various proposals were made to the Government of Central America, from abroad, upon the subject; and in June of that year, the National Congress, with a view of determining the principles upon which it desired the work undertaken, passed a decree to the following purport:

"Article 1. Authorizes the opening of a Canal, fitted for the passage of the largest vessels, in the State of Nicaragua.

"Art. 2. The works to be of the most solid construction.

"Art. 3. The Government shall offer to the undertakers an indemnification equivalent to the cost and labor of the work.

"Art. 4. The Government shall use all means of facilitating the object; permitting the cutting of wood—assisting the Surveyors—forwarding the plans, and, generally, in every manner not injurious to public or private interests.

"Art. 5. No duty shall be charged on instruments and machinery imported for the works of the Canal.

"Art. 6. The expense of the work shall be acknowledged as a National Debt, and the tolls of the Canal shall be applied to its extinguishment, after deducting the necessary costs of maintenance and repairs, and the support of a garrison for its defence.

"Art. 7. Any dispute regarding its liquidation or proofs of outlay, shall be determined according to the laws of the Republic.

"Art. 8. The Congress shall be entitled to establish, and at all times alter, the rates of toll, as it may think proper.

"ART. 9. The navigation shall be open to all nations, friends or neutrals, without privilege or exclusion.

"ART. 10. The Government shall maintain on the Lake the necessary vessels for its defence.

"ART. 11. If invincible impediments, discovered in the course of the work, prevent its execution, the Republic shall not be liable to make any remuneration whatever.

"ART. 12. In case only a boat canal can be opened, the indemnification shall be proportioned to the smaller benefit which will then result to the Republic."

This decree was published jointly with another fixing six months for receiving proposals; but the term designated was too short for any measures to be taken on the part of companies or individuals, and the Congress only received a repetition of a part of the proposals before made.

The principal of these were made by Mr. Baily and Mr. Charles Beniski—the first as agent for the English house of Messrs. Barclay, Herring, Richardson & Co., and the second for Mr. Aaron H. Palmer, of New York. Mr. Baily's offer was conditional, while Mr. Beniski's was positive, and was therefore accepted by the Republic. The contractors, under the name and style of the "Central American and United States Atlantic and Pacific Canal Company," were bound to open through Nicaragua a canal navigable for vessels of all sizes, and to deposit in the city of Granada the sum of $200,000 for the preliminary expenses, within six months; to erect fortresses for the protection of the canal, and to have the works in progress within a period of twelve months. In compensation they were to have two thirds of the profits of the tolls upon the canal until all the capital expended in the work was repaid, with interest at the rate of ten per cent., beside afterwards receiving one-half of the proceeds of the canal for seven years, with certain privileges for introducing steam vessels. The Government was to put at their disposal all the documents relating to the subject existing in its

archives, to permit the cutting of wood, and to furnish laborers at certain rates of wages. In case of non-completion, the works were to revert unconditionally to the Republic. This contract bore date June 14, 1826, and the contractors at once endeavored to secure the coöperation of the Government of the United States. A memorial was presented to Congress, and referred to a Committee, which reported in due time; but here the matter stopped, although it appears to have received the sanction of De Witt Clinton and other distinguished men.

In fact, Mr. Palmer executed a deed of trust to Mr. Clinton, by which that gentleman, Stephen Van Renssalaer, C. D. Colden, Philip Hone, and Lynde Catlin, were constituted Directors of the work. Mr. Clinton's part was undertaken in entire good faith, and as he himself expressed it, "for the promotion of a great and good object, which should be kept free from the taint of speculation." Mr. Palmer went to England in 1827, to secure the coöperation of British capitalists in his enterprise; but owing to various untoward circumstances, his mission proved abortive, and in the autumn of that year he appears to have abandoned the undertaking.

Although the administration of Mr. Adams did not at once fall in with the proposition of the Central American Minister, it was not from a want of interest in the subject, but because it did not desire to commit the country to any specific course of conduct, until the feasibility of the enterprise and the leading facts connected with it should be better known and established. In the mean time the principles upon which it conceived the work should be undertaken and executed, are well exhibited in Mr. Clay's letter of instructions to the ministers of the United States, commissioned to the famous Congress of Panama. Mr. Clay said: "A canal for navigation between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, will form a proper subject of consideration at the Congress. That vast object, if it should ever be accomplished, will be inter-

esting, in a greater or less degree, to all parts of the world; but especially to this continent will accrue its greatest benefits; and to Colombia, Mexico, Central America, Peru, and the United States, more than to any other of the American nations. What is to redound to the advantage of all America should be effected by common means and united exertions, and not left to the separate and unassisted efforts of any one power. * * * If the work should ever be executed, so as to admit of the passage of sea vessels from one ocean to the other, the benefits of it ought not to be exclusively appropriated by any one nation, but should be extended to all parts of the globe, upon the payment of just compensation or reasonable tolls. * * You will receive and transmit to this government any proposals that may be made, or plans that may be suggested, for its joint execution, with assurances that they will be attentively examined, with an earnest desire to reconcile the interests and views of all the American nations." It will be seen that Mr. Clay, who was at that time a true exponent of the American system of policy, regarded the construction of this work as an enterprise peculiarly American, to be executed by the parties most deeply interested in it, to be under their control, but not therefore exclusive.

After the failure of Mr. Palmer's project, the whole matter seems to have been allowed to slumber until some time in October 1828, when the work was proposed to be undertaken by an Association of the Netherlands, under the special patronage of the King of Holland. In March 1829, General Verveer arrived in Guatemala, as Plenipotentiary of the King of the Netherlands, with instructions regarding the undertaking of the canal. In consequence of civil distractions, the subject was not taken up until the succeeding October, when commissioners were appointed to treat with Verveer, and on the 24th of July, 1830, the plan agreed upon between them was laid before the National Congress.

It was ratified on the 21st of September following. The principal features of the agreement were as follows:

1st. The proposed canal to be open on the same terms to all nations at peace with Central America; but vessels engaged in the slave trade, and all privateers, not to be allowed either to pass the canal or hover in the vicinity of its mouths.

2d. Armed ships not allowed to pass without the express consent of the Government of the Republic, and this permission never to be granted to a flag at war with any other nation.

3d. The Government to use all its endeavors to have the neutrality of the canal recognized by all maritime powers, as also that of the ocean for a certain extent around its mouths.

4th. The Republic to make no charge for the land used by the canal, or the raw materials used for its construction; nor to impose taxes on persons employed in the work, who were to be under the protection of the agents of the country to which they might belong.

5th. The work to be of sufficient dimensions to admit the largest ships; and the execution to be left entirely to the parties undertaking it, and to be made wholly at their expense.

6th. The interest on the capital expended to be ten per cent., and as security for both capital and interest, a mortgage to be granted upon the lands for a league on both sides of the canal.

7th. The canal to remain in the hands of the contractors, until it had paid cost of construction and repairs, with ten per cent. annual interest thereon, and also until it had paid three millions of dollars, to be advanced as a loan to the Government, and then to revert unconditionally to the Republic.

8th. The rate of tolls to be regulated by the Government and contractors jointly, but always in such a manner as to give it a decided advantage over Cape Horn.

9th. A free commercial city to be founded on the banks, or at one of the entrances of the canal, which, while enjoying entire freedom of trade, religious tolerance, a municipal government, trial by jury, and exemption from military service, to constitute nevertheless a part of the Republic, and to be under the special protection thereof.

10th. In respect to navigation and commerce generally, the Netherlands to be put upon a footing of equality with the United States.

Arrangements were accordingly made to send envoys to the Netherlands, with full powers to perfect the plan; and,

for a time, the work seemed in a fair way to a commencement; but the revolution of Belgium and the separation of Holland put an end to these hopes. The news of these events was received with profound regret. Mr. Henry Savage, U. S. Consul, in a letter to Mr. Van Buren, dated Guatemala, December 3, 1830, said: "All concur, and every one now seems tacitly to look forward to the United States for the completion of this grand project. They say that the United States, identified in her institutions with this Government, ought to have the preference."

In 1832 endeavors were made to renew the negotiations with Holland, and the State of Nicaragua passed resolutions agreeing to the propositions of the Dutch Envoy, but nothing was accomplished.

Upon the 3d of March, 1835, public attention having again been directed to the subject, a resolution passed the Senate of the United States, "that the President be requested to consider the expediency of opening negotiations with the Governments of other nations, and particularly with the Governments of Central America and New Granada, for the purpose of effectually protecting, by suitable treaty stipulations with them, such individuals or companies as may undertake to open a communication from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, by means of a ship canal across the isthmus which connects North and South America, and of securing for ever, by means of such stipulations, the free and equal right of navigating such canal to all nations, on the payment of such reasonable tolls as may be established to compensate the capitalists who may engage in such undertaking and complete the work."

Under this resolution, a special agent, (Mr. Charles Biddle,) was appointed by General Jackson, to proceed without delay, by the most direct route, to the port of San Juan de Nicaragua, ascend the river San Juan to the Lake of Nicaragua, and thence proceed across the continent, by the contemplated

route of the proposed canal or railroad, to the Pacific Ocean; after which examination, he was directed to repair to Guatemala, the capital of the Republic, and, with the aid of Mr. De Witt, the Charge d'Affaires of the United States, procure all such public documents connected with the subject as might be in existence, and especially copies of all such laws as had been passed, and contracts and conventions as had been made, to carry into effect the undertaking, and also all plans, surveys, or estimates in relation to it. From Guatemala he was directed to proceed to Panama, and make observations and inquiries relative to the proposed connection of the two oceans at that point. Unfortunately, from the difficulties of procuring conveyances to San Juan, the agent went to Panama first. From adverse circumstances, he never reached Nicaragua, and died soon after his return to the United States. He nevertheless made a partial report concerning the Isthmus of Panama, to the effect that it was not practicable for a canal.

In 1837, the subject was again taken up in Central America, by General Morazan, who resolved to have the proposed line of the canal properly surveyed, intending to raise a loan in Europe for the execution of the work. Mr. John Baily was employed for the former purpose, but his work was brought to a sudden close by the dissolution of the Government of the Republic. He nevertheless made a survey of the narrow isthmus intervening between Lake Nicaragua and the Pacific, and also some observations on the River San Juan.

In 1838 a convention was made between the States of Nicaragua and Honduras, under which Mr. Peter Rouchaud was authorized to conclude an agreement in France, for the formation of a company to make a canal, and for other objects; but he effected nothing. The same result attended the efforts of Señor Don George Viteri, subsequently Bishop of San Salvador, who was sent Ambassador to Rome.

In the same year Mr. George Holdship, representing a company composed chiefly of citizens of the United States, residing in New Orleans and New York, among whom was Mr. Soulé of the former city, arrived in Central America, with a view of contracting for the opening of the canal with the General Government. Finding that Nicaragua had "pronounced" against Morazan, and assumed an independent position, he proceeded to that State, where he at once entered into a contract, which provided for opening the canal, for the establishment of a bank to assist the enterprise, and for colonization on an extensive scale. He returned to the United States, and the matter ended.

This year was also signalized by some further movements on the subject, in the United States. A petition was presented to Congress, signed by several citizens of New York and Philadelphia, viz., Aaron Clark, Wm. A. Duer, Herman Leroy, Matthew Carey, and Wm. Radcliff, setting forth that the wants of trade required the opening of a ship communication between the Atlantic and Pacific; that the accumulation of wealth amongst nations and the prevalence of peace seemed to indicate a favorable opportunity for the undertaking; and recommending "that an extensive and powerful combination should be formed, and the most judicious and liberal measures adopted, for the purpose of carrying the plan into effect, and securing its benefits permanently to the world at large." This memorial was referred to a committee, of which the Hon. Chas. F. Mercer was Chairman, who, March 2, 1839, made a report upon it, concluding with the following resolution, which was adopted:

"*Resolved*, That the President of the United States be requested to consider the expediency of opening or continuing negotiations with the governments of other nations, and particularly with those the territorial jurisdiction of which comprehends the Isthmus of Panama, and to which the United States have accredited ministers or agents, for the purpose of ascertaining or effecting a communication between the Atlantic and

Pacific Oceans, by the construction of a ship canal; and of securing forever, by suitable treaty stipulations, the free and equal right of navigating such canal to all nations, on the payment of reasonable tolls."

The subsequent action, both of the Executive and Congress, was directed to the opening of a route across the Isthmus of Panama, and resulted in the negotiation of a treaty between the United States and New Granada, by which the neutrality of the Isthmus was guarantied by the former, in consideration of a free transit conceded by the latter. Under this treaty, the existing Panama Railroad Company was organized, and that route of communication between the two oceans placed in American hands.

The disturbances incident to the dissolution of the Republic of Central America precluded any serious attention to the project of a canal, from 1838 until 1844, when Señor Don Francisco Castellon, having been appointed Minister from Nicaragua to France, and failing to interest that Government, entered into a contract with a Belgian company, under the auspices of the Belgian King, for the construction of the work. The grant was for sixty years, at the end of which time it was to revert to the State without indemnity, the State receiving meantime an interest of ten per cent. in the profits.

Still later, in April, 1846, a contract was made by Mr. Marcoleta, Nicaraguan Charge d' Affaires to Belgium, with Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, then a prisoner at Ham, which differed but little from the preceding one, except that the canal was to be called "*Canal Napoleon de Nicaragua.*" Beyond the publication of a pamphlet upon the subject, under the initials of Bonaparte, this attempt also proved abortive.

So the matter rested until 1849, when the acquisition of California by the United States, and the discovery there of vast mineral wealth, again directed public attention to the project, in a more serious manner than at any previous

period. It now began to assume a practical form, and, as a consequence, there was a renewal of propositions to the Government of Nicaragua. The first of these, in the form of bases subject to future adjustment, came, under date of 16th of February, from Mr. William Wheelwright, the projector of the British line of steamers on the western coast of South America, upon behalf of an English company. It embodied, substantially, the provisions of the contract of 1844 with the Belgian company, but was never acted upon by the Nicaraguan Government.

The second was in the form of a detailed contract, and was entered into between Mr. D. T. Brown, representing certain citizens of New York, and General Muñoz, Commissioner of the Nicaraguan Government, on the 14th of March, 1849. It, however, never received the sanction of the Executive, nor was it ratified by the company within the time stipulated by its terms.

In the meantime, however, namely, as early as January 1848, when it became evident that the Mexican war could only terminate in large territorial acquisitions to the United States, the Port of San Juan de Nicaragua, the only possible eastern terminus of the proposed canal, was seized by Great Britain, under the pretext of supporting the territorial rights of a savage, facetiously styled "King of the Mosquitos." This act could not be viewed with indifference by the Government of our own country; for it not only violated the principle constantly recognized and asserted by the United States, that the routes of transit between the two oceans should be free to the whole world, uncontrolled by any great maritime power, but it violated also a principle early and well established amongst the American nations, namely, the exclusion of all foreign, and especially monarchical, interference from the domestic and international affairs of this continent. The real purpose of the seizure of San Juan was too apparent to escape detection; and the Government of the

United States, upon these principles, would have been bound to interpose against the consummation of the felony. But it was specially bound to interpose, after it had been earnestly and repeatedly solicited to do so by the injured Republic in question. These solicitations were forcibly made, in letters addressed to the President of the United States by the Supreme Director of Nicaragua, dated Dec. 15, 1847, as also in letters from the Secretary of State of that Republic, of the dates respectively of Nov. 12, 1847, and March 17, 1848. "The obvious design of Great Britain," said the Director of Nicaragua, "in seizing upon the Port of San Juan, and setting up pretensions to sovereignty, in behalf of savage tribes, within the territories of Nicaragua, is to found colonies, and to make herself master of the prospective interoceanic canal, for the construction of which this Isthmus alone has the requisites of feasibility and facility."

Although the matter was thus brought before the American Government, it does not seem to have elicited any action beyond certain instructions from Mr. Buchanan, then Secretary of State, to Mr. Hise, appointed Charge d'Affaires to Central America. "The object of Great Britain in this seizure," said Mr. Buchanan, "is evident from the policy which she has uniformly pursued throughout her history, of seizing upon every valuable commercial point in the world, whenever circumstances have placed it in her power. Her purpose probably is to obtain the control of the route for a railroad and canal between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, by way of Lake Nicaragua." But while insisting upon the policy of "excluding all interference on the part of European Governments in the domestic affairs of the American Republics," Mr. Buchanan gave no specific instructions as to the line of conduct to be pursued by Mr. Hise, in respect to the proposed canal or the British usurpation. He confined himself to a denial of the British pretensions, and concluded by observing that "the Government of the United States has

not yet determined what course it will pursue in regard to the encroachments of the British Government."

About this time, viz., under date of April 4, 1849, Mr. Manning, British Vice Consul in Nicaragua, wrote to Lord Palmerston as follows:

"My opinion, if your lordship will allow me to express it, as regards this country for the present, is, that it will be overrun by American adventurers, and consequently bring on Her Majesty's Government disagreeable communications with that of the United States, which possibly might be avoided by an immediate negotiation with Mr. Castillon for a *protectorate and transit favorable to British interests.* * * The welfare of my country, and the desire of its *obtaining the control of so desirable a spot in the commercial world*, and free it from the competition of so adventurous a race as the North Americans, induces me to address your lordship with such freedom."

Upon his arrival in Central America, Mr. Hise became speedily convinced that the whole scope of British policy in that country was directed to acquiring permanent control of the Nicaraguan isthmus. Deeply impressed with the importance to the United States of a free transit across it, although not empowered to treat with Nicaragua, he nevertheless conceived himself authorized, under the circumstances, in opening negotiations with the Government of that Republic.[1] He therefore requested the appointment of a commissioner for that purpose, to meet him in Guatemala, where, upon the 21st of June, 1849, a special convention relating to this subject, was agreed upon. The provisions of this convention, it

[1] "I was induced with all possible despatch to conclude this treaty, because I had information, from authentic sources, that English companies were endeavoring to procure for themselves the privileges which I have thus secured, and that the British Government, by encroachments and aggressions at the mouth and on the borders of the river San Juan, designed to so embarrass the subject, and to present such obstacles in the way, as to defeat altogether the project of making a ship canal between the two oceans."—*Mr. Hise to the Secretary of State.*

is not to be denied, were, in some respects, extraordinary, and not in entire harmony with the established exterior policy of the United States. It provided,

1st. That the United States should enjoy the perpetual right of way through the territories of Nicaragua, by any means of conveyance then existing or which might thereafter be devised.

2d. That the United States, or a company chartered by it, might construct a railroad or canal from one ocean to the other, and occupy such lands and use such natural materials and products of the country as might be necessary for the purpose.

3d. That the United States should have the right to erect such forts on the line, or at the extremities of the proposed work, as might be deemed necessary or proper for its protection.

4th. That the vessels and citizens of all nations at peace with both contracting powers might pass freely through the canal.

5th. That a section of land two leagues square at either termination should be set apart to serve as the sites of two free cities, under the protection of both governments, the inhabitants of which should enjoy complete municipal and religious freedom, trial by jury, exemption from all military duty, and from taxation, etc., etc.

5th. That in return for these and other concessions, which it is unnecessary to enumerate, the United States should defend and protect Nicaragua, her territorial rights, her sovereignty, preserve the peace and neutrality of her coasts, etc., etc., which guarantees were to extend to any community of States of which Nicaragua might voluntarily become a member.

But while Mr. Hise was thus occupied in Central America, the administration of General Taylor had been inaugurated. The affairs of that country attracted his immediate attention. The letters addressed by the Government of Nicaragua to Mr. Polk and Mr. Buchanan, and which had remained unanswered, were replied to in the friendliest spirit; and before the expiration of the first month of General Taylor's term of office, Mr. Hise was recalled, and the writer of these pages appointed, in his stead, as Charge d'Affaires of the United States to Guatemala, besides receiving special commissions to the other States of Central America, with full powers to

treat with them separately, on all matters affecting their relations with this Republic. It will be seen, therefore, that Mr. Hise was not only not empowered to treat with Nicararagua, but also that his negotiations were undertaken after the date of his letter of recall, which, however, failed to reach him until after the signing of the special convention, and after my arrival in the country. Under these circumstances, and having meantime determined upon a specific line of policy, this convention was neither approved by the American Government, nor accepted by that of Nicaragua.

The spirit in which the matter was taken up by the administration of General Taylor, and the principles upon which its action was predicated, are fully and clearly exhibited in the following passages from the instructions addressed to me by Mr. Clayton, Secretary of State. After disproving, in an unanswerable manner, the pretensions of Great Britain on the Mosquito shore, Mr. Clayton submits the following significant question, and equally significant reply:

"Will other nations interested in a free passage to and from the Pacific, by the river San Juan and Lake Nicaragua, tamely allow that interest to be thwarted by the pretensions of Great Britain? As regards the United States, the question may be confidently answered in the negative.

"Having now," continues the Secretary of State, "sufficiently apprised you of the views of the Department in regard to the title to the Mosquito Coast, I desire you to understand how important it is deemed by the President, so to conduct all our negotiations on the subject of the Nicaraguan passage as not to involve this country in any entangling alliances on the one hand, or any unnecessary controversy on the other. We desire no monopoly of the right of way for our commerce, and we cannot submit to it if claimed for that of any other nation. If we held and enjoyed such a monopoly, it would entail upon us more bloody and expensive wars than the struggle for Gibraltar has caused to England and Spain. The same calamity would infallibly be cast upon any other nation claiming to exclude the commerce of the rest of the world. We only ask an equal right of passage for all nations on the same terms—a passage unincumbered by oppressive restrictions, either from the local Government

within whose sovereign limits it may be effected, or from the proprietors of the canal when accomplished. To this end we are willing to enter into treaty stipulations with the Government of Nicaragua, that both Governments shall protect and defend the proprietors who may succeed in cutting the canal and opening water communication between the two oceans for our commerce. Without such protection, it is not believed this great enterprise would ever be successful. Nicaragua is a feeble State, and capitalists, proverbially a timid race, may apprehend from the rapacity of great maritime powers the obstruction and even the seizure of the canal. Similar apprehensions on their part, from revolutions in the local government, from the oppressions and exactions of temporary chieftains, and from causes not necessary to be explained, may operate to retard a work in regard to which it may be safely predicted, that, when successfully accomplished, its benefits to mankind will transcend those of any similar work known in the history of the world. All these apprehensions may and will be removed by the solemn pledge of protection given by the United States, and especially when it is known that our object in giving it is not to acquire for ourselves any exclusive or partial advantages over other nations. Nicaragua will be at liberty to enter into the same treaty stipulations with any other nation that may claim to enjoy the same benefits and will agree to be bound by the same conditions. In desiring that our citizens may obtain the charter or grant of the right to make the canal, we do not mean to be misunderstood. Our purpose, in aiding American citizens to obtain the grant, is to encourage them in a laudable effort; relying, as their own Government does, more on their skill and enterprise than on those of others. If they themselves prefer to unite with their own the capital of foreigners, who may desire to embark in the undertaking, this Government will not object to that. We should naturally be proud of such an achievement as an American work; but if European aid be necessary to accomplish it, why should we repudiate it, seeing that our object is as honest as it is openly avowed, to claim no peculiar privileges, no exclusive right, no monopoly of commercial intercourse, but to see that the work is dedicated to the benefit of mankind, to be used by all on the same terms with us, and consecrated to the enjoyment and diffusion of the unnumbered and inestimable blessings which must flow from it to all the civilized world. You will not want arguments to induce Nicaragua to enter into such a treaty with us. The canal will be productive of more benefit to her than any other country of the same limits. With the aid of the treaty it may—without such protection from some power equal to our own it cannot—be accomplished. Let your negotiations with her be frank, open, and unreserved, as to all of our purposes.

"The same reasons for our interference must be avowed to the capitalists who engage in the work. Before you treat for their protection, look well to their contract with Nicaragua. See that it is not assignable to others; that no exclusive privileges are granted to any nation that shall agree to the same treaty stipulations with Nicaragua; that the tolls to be demanded by the owners are not unreasonable or oppressive; that no power be reserved to the proprietors of the canal, or their successors, to extort at any time henceforth, or unjustly to obstruct or embarrass the right of passage. This will require all your vigilance and skill. If they do not agree to grant us passage on reasonable and proper terms, refuse our protection and countenance to procure the contract from Nicaragua. If a charter or grant of the right of way shall have been incautiously or inconsiderately made before your arrival in the country, seek to have it properly modified to answer the ends we have in view."

Upon arriving in Nicaragua, I found there a gentleman representing Mr. Cornelius Vanderbilt and his associates, citizens of New York, the object of whose mission was to procure a charter or grant for the construction of a canal through the territories of that Republic. Having previously entertained so many projects for the accomplishment of this object, all of which had failed, the Government of Nicaragua was indisposed to listen to any further propositions until it was assured, as I was authorized to assure it, that the American Government was willing to extend its guarantees to any charter, of a proper character, which might now be granted. Under the confidence inspired by this assurance, it proceeded with alacrity to arrange the terms of a charter, more liberal than any ever before conceded, which was signed on the 27th of August, 1849, and ratified on the 23d of the month following.

The terms of this grant are very well known; yet the following synopsis of its provisions will not prove out of place in this connection. It provides,

1st. That the American Atlantic and Pacific Ship Canal Company may construct a ship canal, at its own expense, from the Port of San Juan, or

any more feasible point on the Atlantic, to the Port of Realejo, or any other point within the territories of the Republic, on the Pacific, and make use of all lands, waters, or natural materials of the country, for the enterprise.

2d. The dimensions of the canal shall be sufficiently great to admit vessels of all sizes.

3d. The grant is for the period of eighty-five years from the completion of the work; the preliminary surveys to be commenced within twelve months; the work to be completed in twelve years, unless unforeseen events, such as earthquakes or wars, shall intervene to prevent it; if not completed within that time, the charter to be forfeit, and whatever work may have been done to revert to the State; at the end of eighty-five years the work to revert to the State, free from all indemnity for the capital invested; the Company, nevertheless, to receive fifteen per cent. annually of the net profits, for ten years thereafter, if the entire cost shall not exceed $20,000,000; but if it does exceed that sum, then it shall receive the same per centage for twenty years thereafter.

4th. The Company to pay to the State ten thousand dollars upon the ratification of the contract, and ten thousand dollars annually, until the completion of the work; also, to give to the State two hundred thousand dollars of stock in the canal, upon the issue of stock; the State to have the privilege of taking five hundred thousand dollars of stock in the enterprise; to receive, for the first twenty years, twenty per cent. annually out of the net profits of the canal, after deducting the interest on the capital actually invested, at the rate of seven per cent.; and also to receive twenty-five per cent. thereafter, until the expiration of the grant.

5th. The Company to have the exclusive right of navigating the interior waters of the State by steam, and the privilege, within the twelve years allowed for constructing the canal, of opening any land or other route or means of transit or conveyance across the State; in consideration of which, the Company shall pay, irrespective of interest, ten per cent. of the net profits of such transit to the State, and transport, both on such route, and on the canal, when finished, the officers of the Government and its employees, when required to do so, free of charge.

6th. The canal to be open to the vessels of all nations, subject only to certain fixed and uniform rates of toll, to be established by the Company, with the sanction of the State, graduated to induce the largest and most extended business by this route; these rates not to be altered without six months previous notice, both in Nicaragua and the United States.

7th. The contract, and the rights and privileges conceded by it, to be held inalienably by the individuals composing the Company.

8th. All disputes to be settled by referees or commissioners, to be appointed in a specified manner.

9th. All machinery and other articles introduced into the State for the use of the Company, to enter free of duty; and all persons in its employ to enjoy all the privileges of citizens, without being subjected to taxation or military service.

10th. The State concedes to the Company, for purposes of colonization, eight sections of land on the line of the canal, in the valley of the River San Juan, each six miles square, and at least three miles apart, with the right of alienating the same, under certain reservations; all settlers on these lands to be subject to the laws of the country, being, however, exempt for ten years from all taxes, and also from all public service, as soon as each colony shall contain fifty settlers.

11th. "Art. xxxvi. It is expressly stipulated that the citizens, vessels, products, and manufactures of *all nations* shall be permitted to pass upon the proposed canal through the territories of Nicaragua, subject to no other nor higher duties, charges, or taxes, than shall be imposed upon those of the United States; *provided always*, that such nations shall first enter into the same treaty stipulations and guarantees, respecting said canal, as may be entered into between the State of Nicaragua and the United States."

The article providing that the contract shall be held inalienably by the individuals of the Company, was drawn up by myself, to guard against the probability of its being made a mere cloak for stock gambling. It originally provided that the Canal Company should "not become dependent upon, or connected with, any other company, whatever its objects." The latter provision was left out, at the solicitation of the Company, when the contract was subsequently modified.

Article xxxvi., which is quoted in full, was also drawn up by myself, and its insertion insisted on, in conformity with my instructions. The simple object was, to put upon the same footing with the United States every nation which should undertake the same obligations with ourselves, in respect to the proposed work. These obligations were distinctly set forth in the Treaty of Commerce and Friendship

which was negotiated, simultaneously, with the Nicaraguan Government, and which, in Article xxxv., provided as follows:

"ARTICLE XXXV.

"It is and has been stipulated, by and between the high contracting parties—

"1st. That the citizens, vessels, and merchandise of the United States shall enjoy in all the ports and harbors of Nicaragua, upon both oceans, a total exemption from all port-charges, tonnage or anchorage duties, or any other similar charges now existing, or which may hereafter be established, in manner the same as if said ports had been declared Free Ports. And it is further stipulated, that the right of way or transit across the territories of Nicaragua, by any route or upon any mode of communication at present existing, or which may hereafter be constructed, shall at all times be open and free to the Government and citizens of the United States, for all lawful purposes whatever; and no tolls, duties, or charges of any kind shall be imposed upon the transit in whole or part, by such modes of communication, of vessels of war, or other property belonging to the Government of the United States, or on public mails sent under the authority of the same, or upon persons in its employ, nor upon citizens of the United States, nor upon vessels belonging to them. And it is also stipulated that all lawful produce, manufactures, merchandise, or other property belonging to citizens of the United States, passing from one ocean to the other, in either direction, for the purpose of exportation to foreign countries, shall not be subject to any import or export duties whatever; or if citizens of the United States, having introduced such produce, manufactures, or merchandise into the State of Nicaragua, for sale or exchange, shall, within three years thereafter, determine to export the same, they shall be entitled to drawback equal to four fifths of the amount of duties paid upon their importation.

"2d. And inasmuch as a contract was entered into on the twenty-seventh day of August, 1849, between the Republic of Nicaragua and a company of citizens of the United States, styled the 'American Atlantic and Pacific Ship Canal Company,' and in order to secure the construction and permanence of the great work thereby contemplated, both high contracting parties do severally and jointly agree to protect and defend the above-named Company in the full and perfect enjoyment of said work, from its inception to its completion, and after its completion, from any acts of invasion, forfeiture, or violence, from whatever quarter the same may

proceed; and to give full effect to the stipulations here made, and to secure for the benefit of mankind the uninterrupted advantages of such communication from sea to sea, the United States distinctly recognizes the rights of sovereignty and property which the State of Nicaragua possesses in and over the line of said canal, and for the same reason guaranties, positively and efficaciously, the entire neutrality of the same, so long as it shall remain under the control of citizens of the United States, and so long as the United States shall enjoy the privileges secured to them in the preceding section of this article.

"3d. But if, by any contingency, the above-named 'American Atlantic and Pacific Ship Canal Company' shall fail to comply with the terms of their contract with the State of Nicaragua, all the rights and privileges which said contract confers shall accrue to any Company of citizens of the United States which shall, within one year after the official declaration of failure, undertake to comply with its provisions, so far as the same may at that time be applicable, provided the company thus assuming said contract shall first present to the President and Secretary of State of the United States satisfactory assurances of their intention and ability to comply with the same; of which satisfactory assurances the signature of the Secretary of State and the seal of the Department shall be complete evidence.

"4th. And it is also agreed, on the part of the Republic of Nicaragua, that none of the rights, privileges, and immunities guaranteed, and by the preceding articles, but especially by the first section of this article, conceded to the United States and its citizens, shall accrue to any other nation, or to its citizens, except such nation shall first enter into the same treaty stipulations, for the defence and protection of the proposed great interoceanic canal, which have been entered into by the United States, in terms the same with those embraced in section 2d of this article."

The provisions of this article were not only in conformity with my instructions, but their inevitable tendency and design was, to make it to the interest of every nation in the world to maintain the neutrality of the canal, and the independence and territorial integrity of Nicaragua. They secured to the United States every desirable privilege in her intercourse, commercial or otherwise, with Nicaragua; yet those privileges were in no wise exclusive; they would accrue to every other nation, upon the same conditions; con-

ditions to which no nation except England could possibly object, and she only in the event of insisting upon her preposterous pretensions on what is called the Mosquito Shore.

And this is precisely the reason why the treaty containing this article was met by the unqualified hostility of the British Government; it placed England in a position of antagonism to the whole world, and made it to the interest of every maritime country that she should relinquish her hold on San Juan. To avoid the alternative which the consummation of this treaty would impose, the utmost efforts of her diplomacy were put forth to defeat its acceptance by the contracting parties. In Nicaragua these efforts signally failed; the treaty was unanimously ratified by the Legislative Chambers, simultaneously with the Canal Contract, on the 23d of September, 1849. It was at once despatched to the United States, approved by General Taylor and his Cabinet, and submitted, in conformity with the requirements of the Constitution, to the Senate for its ratification. It reached that body at an unfortunate period, when Congress was distracted with questions growing out of the existence of slavery in the United States, and, for this and other reasons, did not receive immediate attention.

Meantime the nation was shocked by the death of Gen. Taylor. This event was followed by the installation of a new Cabinet, and a general change in the foreign policy of the Government—a policy eminently distinguished as having been clear, bold, and decided, worthy of a country holding the first rank amongst nations. The British Envoy at Washington, deeming the opportunity favorable for his purpose, redoubled his exertions to procure the rejection of the treaty, or its essential modification, so as to do away with the alternative, so fatal to British designs, which its terms imposed. Communication after communication reached the State Department from this zealous and active officer, in which the circumstance that Gen. Taylor's administration

condescended to enter into treaty relations with Nicaragua, was abundantly ridiculed, and the feeble Government of Nicaragua, in its *personnel*, as in its powers and purposes, not only ridiculed as ignorant, weak, and poor, but unsparingly denounced as faithless and corrupt. One of these letters, subsequently communicated by Mr. Webster to the Committee of Foreign Relations of the Senate, contained Mr. Bulwer's substitute for the obnoxious article in question; the acceptance of which substitute, by the American Government, was urged upon every ground, and by every appeal, likely to influence the officer to whom it was addressed.

It is not my purpose to pursue this historical relation further, or to recount the proceedings which followed on these extraordinary movements of the British Envoy. They will constitute a singular, and very interesting, perhaps astounding, chapter, in the history of our Foreign Relations. It is enough to know that Congress adjourned without action upon the treaty; that a subsequent session passed with the same result; and that up to this time nothing has been done to vindicate our broken faith to Nicaragua, or retrieve the national honor, impaired by the failure to fulfill our portion of the compact entered into with her, in the summer of 1849.

It should, however, be mentioned, in order to complete this *resumé* of proceedings connected with the proposed canal, that a convention, generally known as the "Clayton and Bulwer Treaty," was concluded between the United States and Great Britain, April 19, 1850, and proclaimed in July of the same year, which provided, in general terms, for the joint protection of that work by the contracting powers. It stipulates:

1st. That neither party "will ever obtain or maintain for itself any exclusive control over" this canal, or erect fortifications commanding the same or in its vicinity, "or occupy or colonize, or assume or exercise dominion over Nicaragua, Costa Rica, the Mosquito shore, or any part of Central America, nor *make use of any protection which either affords*, or *any alliance which either has or may have*," for the purpose of erecting, or for-

tifying, or colonizing the region above named, or any part of it, or for the purpose of "*assuming or exercising dominion over the same*," nor will either party make use of its relations with those countries to procure exclusive privileges for itself or its subjects in the proposed canal.

2d. Neither party will capture or detain the vessels of the other while passing through the canal, or while within —— distance of either of its extremities.

3d. To protect the parties undertaking the construction of the canal, from "unjust detention, seizure, or violence."

4th. To use their influence respectively to facilitate the work, and their good offices to procure the establishment of a free port at either end.

5th. To guaranty the neutrality of the canal, so long as the proprietors shall not make unfair discriminations on vessels in transit, or impose unreasonable tolls; to enter into treaties with the Central American States to promote the work; to interpose their good offices to settle all disputes concerning it, etc., etc.

6th. Both governments to lend their support to such company as shall first present evidences of its intention and ability to undertake the work, with the consent of the local governments; *one year* to be allowed from the date of the ratification of the convention, for the company now in existence to "*present evidence of sufficient capital subscribed to accomplish the undertaking*," it being understood that if, in that time, no such evidence shall be presented, then both governments shall be at liberty to afford their protection to any person or company which shall then be prepared to commence and proceed with the work in question.

7th. The same general protection to extend to every practicable route of communication across the continent, on the same principles.

This treaty was ratified, less on the merits of the guaranty which it extended to the projected canal, than because it was understood to put an end to the obnoxious protectorate, amounting to absolute dominion, of Great Britain on the Mosquito shore. Such was the understanding of the treaty by Mr. Clayton, the negotiator on the part of the United States, who, in a despatch under date of May 7, 1850, said, in reference to it:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
WASHINGTON, MAY 7, 1850.

* * * * "It is proper that I should now inform you that I have negotiated a treaty with Sir Henry Bulwer, the object of which is to se-

cure the protection of the British Government to the Nicaraguan Canal, and to liberate Central America from the dominion of any foreign power.

* * * * * * * * *

"I hope and believe that this treaty will prove equally honorable both to Great Britain and the United States, the more especially as it secures the weak sister Republics of Central America from foreign aggression. All other nations that shall navigate the canal will have to become guarantors of the neutrality of Central America and the Mosquito coast. The agreement is, 'not to erect or maintain any fortifications commanding the canal, or in the vicinity thereof; nor to occupy, fortify, colonize, or assume or exercise any dominion whatever over any part of Nicaragua, Costa Rica, the Mosquito coast, or Central America; nor to make use of any protection or alliance, for any of these purposes.'

"Great Britain having thus far made an agreement with us for the great and philanthropic purpose of opening the ship communication through the Isthmus, it will now be most desirable immediately after the ratification of the treaty, on both sides, that you should cultivate the most friendly relations with the British agents in that country, who will hereafter have to devote their energies and co-operation with ours, to the accomplishment of the great work designed by the treaty. Kindness and conciliation are most earnestly recommended by me to you. I trust that means will speedily be adopted by Great Britain to extinguish the Indian title, with the help of the Nicaraguans, or the Company, within what we consider to be the limits of Nicaragua. We have never acknowledged, and never can acknowledge, the existence of any claim of sovereignty in the Mosquito king, or any other Indian in America. To do so, would be to deny the title of the United States to our own territories. Having always regarded an Indian title as a mere right of occupancy, we can never agree that such a title should be treated otherwise than as a thing to be extinguished at the will of the discoverer of the country. Upon the ratification of the treaty, Great Britain will no longer have any interest to deny this principle, which she has recognized in every other case in common with us. Her protectorate will be reduced to a shadow—"*Stat nominis umbra;*" for she can neither occupy, fortify, nor colonize, or exercise dominion or control in any part of the Mosquito coast or Central America. To attempt to do either of these things, after the exchange of ratifications, would inevitably produce a rupture with the United States. By the terms neither party can occupy to protect, nor protect to occupy.

* * * * * * * * *

(Signed) JOHN M. CLAYTON."

This construction has been as explicitly denied by Mr. Bulwer, in his letters to Mr. Webster, in which he affirms that the convention was not designed to affect the position of Great Britain in respect to the Mosquito shore. He asks, substantially, why is there any reference to "protection" as existing, or as hereafter likely to exist, if the fact of the protectorate, and the right of a protectorate, were not recognized? We have agreed not to use this protectorate for the specific purpose of obstructing the proposed canal—nothing more!

This is not the place to discuss the correctness or fallacy of either construction; it is enough to know that the American construction has been practically negatived from the ratification of the treaty until this hour; that Great Britain has not only occupied San Juan, and exercised dominion over it, but still continues to do so, in a manner equally offensive to the United States and to Nicaragua.[1]

[1] On the 15th of August, 1850, the British Representative in Central America wrote to the Government of Nicaragua as follows:

"Instead of insisting on its supposed rights to the Mosquito shore, Nicaragua would best consult her interests by at once making good terms with England; for resistance in this matter will be of no further avail. It is impossible that Nicaragua should be ignorant of her Britannic Majesty's relation to the Mosquito question, as it has before it the letter of Viscount Palmerston, of the date of the 15th of April last, in which *he declares, in the most clear and direct terms, the utter impossibility of acceding to the pretensions of Nicaragua.* On the other hand, the treaty of Messrs. Clayton and Bulwer, about which you have so much to say, and in which you express so much confidence, *expressly recognizes the Mosquito Kingdom, and sets aside the rights which you pretend Nicaragua has on that coast.* The true policy for Nicaragua, is to undeceive herself in this respect, and to put no further confidence in the protestations or assurances of pretended friends, [viz. Americans.] It will be far better for her to come to an understanding without delay with Great Britain, on which nation depends not only the welfare and commerce of the State, but also the probability of accomplishing anything positive concerning interoceanic communication through her territories, because it is only in London that the necessary capital for such an enterprise can be found."

Again, on the 5th of December, 1850, the same officer wrote to the

The provisions of the treaty, in other respects, have been of no practical value. No company has presented evidences of its capability to carry out the enterprise of the canal; and consequently that styled "the American Atlantic and Pacific Ship Canal Company," cannot lay claim to the joint protection of the two governments, under the terms of the treaty; nor has it the guaranty of the United States, as provided for, by the, as yet, unratified treaty of 1849.

In respect to the practical operations of this Company very little is known, beyond the fact that, in July or August, 1850, a party of engineers, in its employ, sailed for Nicaragua, and has since made a survey of a line from Lake Nicaragua to the Pacific, not very far from that pursued by Galisteo and Baily,—less, probably, with a view to the construction of a canal, than to the opening of a transit road. The results of this survey are not before the public in an authentic form, nor is it known that any further surveys or other practical operations have been made by them, on any of the routes for a canal hitherto suggested. In fact, their operations seem to have been confined to the opening of a new route of transit for passengers to California; for which, as I have elsewhere said, the Isthmus of Nicaragua presents many important advantages. To this end they last year despatched a small steamer, called the "Director," which

Nicaraguan Government, informing it of the boundaries "*which Her Majesty's Government proposes to assert for the Mosquito King*," as follows:

"The undersigned, Her Britannic Majesty's Charge d'Affaires in Central America, with this view, has the honor to declare to the Minister of Foreign Relations of the Supreme Government of Nicaragua, that the general boundary line of the Mosquito territory begins at the northern extremity of the boundary line between the district of Tegucigalpa, in Honduras, and the jurisdiction of New Segovia; and after following the northern frontiers of New Segovia, it runs along the south-eastern limit of the district of Matagalpa and Chontales, and thence in an eastern course until it reaches the Machuca Rapids, on the river San Juan."

succeeded in reaching the Lake, where it is now plying. Other, and still smaller steamers, designed to run on the river, it is said, have also been sent out; a road has been opened from Lake Nicaragua to the Port of San Juan del Sur; and a line of ocean steamers to ply between New York and San Juan on the eastern coast of the continent, and San Juan del Sur and San Francisco, on the western, have commenced making regular voyages.

It is not certain whether the Government of Nicaragua will regard what has been done as a *bona fide* compliance, either with the spirit or the terms of the tenth article of the contract, which provides that the surveys *for the canal* shall be commenced within one year after the ratification of the contract. Still, looking to the advantages which may accrue to the country, from even a transit route through its territories, it may not insist upon a strict and technical compliance with the terms of the contract; it may even overlook the fatal vitiation of that contract, in consequence of the failure of the treaty in connection with which it was negotiated, upon which it depends, and without which it is of little or no value. That treaty afforded a guaranty of protection, and this was the prime condition upon which the concession was made. Its failure would afford just ground for a declaration of forfeiture; but whether or not that will be made, will doubtless depend much upon the future proceedings of the Company, now retaining their contract by sufferance alone.

Since the above was written, the Company here referred to despatched one of its own members to Nicaragua, with the view of procuring a separation of the privilege of exclusive steam-navigation, in the interior waters of the State, from the remainder of the canal contract, and to secure other additional privileges necessary to establish a monopoly of transit across the Nicaraguan Isthmus. This exclusive privilege

was principally conceded for the purpose of facilitating the construction of the canal; and not to organize a monopoly in the hands of any set of men. Accordingly, and regarding the attempt to procure this separation as covering a design to abandon the proposed canal, by securing independently all that could, for many years at least, prove of value, the Government of Nicaragua refused its assent. Political disturbances subsequently occurring, the constituted authorities of the State were overthrown, and two distinct Governments installed, one at Leon, another at Grenada.

It can hardly be supposed that any foreigner would be competent to decide which of these two Governments had the best claim to be regarded as legitimate. Yet the agent of the Canal Company, without waiting for the question of legitimacy, or the *de facto* predominance of one or the other to be determined, seized the moment of revolution to press his purposes with the parties claiming to constitute the Government at Grenada, and by promises of furnishing men and arms, by professions of unbounded influence with the British and American Governments, and by other representations equally fallacious, succeeded in procuring its consent to his purposes. The impropriety of negotiating under such circumstances and upon such grounds, is sufficiently obvious. No sooner did the Provincial Government at Leon hear of these proceedings, than it issued an order denouncing the whole proceedings of the Canal agent, and declaring his new charter null and void, as follows:

"The Provisional Supreme Government will see with satisfaction the interests of the aforesaid company arranged in harmony with those of this State when it shall have recovered its internal peace, and when its Government is qualified to enter upon affairs of this kind; but any negotiations concluded in the mean time are not authorized by it, nor will they be recognized as legal and subsisting. * * * *

CHAPTER III.

THE INTEROCEANIC CANAL, UNDER ITS COMMERCIAL AND POLITICAL ASPECTS.

It is, of course, impossible to calculate with anything more than approximate accuracy the advantages which, upon the score of economy alone, would result to the world from the construction of the proposed canal. Its general benefits to mankind, from the augmentation of commerce, the opening of new markets, the creation of new sources of demand, and the cheapening of all articles of import, with the consequent increase of manufactures and agricultural supplies, cannot be calculated by the narrow standard of dollars and cents. The employment which would, under the new era, be given to the overgrown and starving populations of Europe, the new fields which it would open to enterprise, and the diffusion of light, knowledge, and civilization which follows always upon any great improvement in the physical condition of mankind, and which increases with every saving of an hour's time, or a mile's distance in the communications between nations—all these are considerations which must lead the Statesman, the Philosopher, and the Philanthropist, to regard the proposed undertaking with deeper interest than any which has claimed the attention of mankind. The conjunction of time and circumstance is favorable for the work, and it now seems that the "star of empire," which, in its westward progress, stood still for awhile upon the crown of the Cordilleras, is destined to pass onward to its culmination, while the giant arm of

conjoined capital and labor smites through the barriers which nature has set up between two hemispheres.

These general considerations, however, are not those which are most likely to lead to the realization of the enterprise. Practical results follow only upon real wants; and even the mightiest schemes of ambition are seldom perfected, except when they harmonize with the tangible interests of the nations which cherish them. The requirements of Trade first directed the attention of men to the project of an interoceanic canal, and to these all political considerations and ideas of national aggrandisement are but secondary. Agriculture, manufactures, and commerce have come to be regarded as the standards of national greatness; they are the essential sources of wealth and power. These, in conjunction with her illimitable natural resources, and the activity, intelligence, and enterprise of her people, have made the United States what she now is, the most prosperous and the most powerful nation on the globe. Powerful, not in her army nor her war marine, but in the *ability* to organize both, when occasion shall require, on a grander and more efficient scale than the world has ever seen.

The proposed canal, therefore, first claims our attention under its commercial aspect. That its construction would prove generally advantageous to commerce is undoubted, but in what manner, and to what extent, is not well understood. I have alluded to the Eastern or Oriental Trade, as a great, if not the principal source of the wealth and power of the maritime nations of Europe. It was early supposed, and is still believed, that the opening of a ship canal across the American Isthmus, would prove highly beneficial to that trade, and to the nations enjoying it, both by shortening the distance and the time, between the Oriental and the European ports. Such, however, is not the fact; at any rate, not to the extent which has almost universally been supposed. Considered in reference to that trade, the United States will

derive the principal, if not sole advantages from the opening of the proposed canal; advantages solid and permanent, and which must materially affect her greatness and future destiny. Leaving entirely out of view the superiority, in every respect, of American ships and steamers over those of all other nations, and which, under equal conditions, would place the United States at the head of the commercial world, the advantages which would accrue from the canal, to the United States and England relatively, in respect of distance, in communicating with the centres of Oriental trade, are compendiously shown in the following table. The distances around Cape Horn are not included, because the route by the Cape of Good Hope is both shortest and quickest.

	Via Cape of Good Hope.	Via Proposed Canal.	Net Loss.	Net Gain.
From England				
To Canton	15,600	15,800	200	
" Calcutta	13,500	17,400	3,900	
" Singapore	14,300	16,600	2,300	
From New York				
To Canton	17,100	12,600	——	4,500
" Calcutta	15,000	14,000	——	1,000
" Singapore . . .	15,800	13,200	——	2,600

Relatively, therefore, and by the best of existing routes, England is now 1,700 miles nearer the centres of Asiatic trade than the Atlantic ports of the United States. Should the proposed canal be built, not only will this physical advantage be reversed, but those ports will be placed 3,000 miles nearer the Oriental markets than England. That is to say, the net gain to the United States would be not less than 4,500 miles; or calculating time, which is a better standard than distance, a gain of from twenty-five to thirty days.[1]

[1] "The Englishman meets the American, in all the markets of the world, except those of the Gulf and the Caribbean Sea, with the advantage of ten days and upwards.

"Notwithstanding this disadvantage, in their commercial race with

Again; in respect to the trade of the western coast of South America, and the Sandwich Islands, which is daily growing in importance, the advantages accruing to the United States would be, relatively, still greater.

	Via Cape Horn.	Via Proposed Canal.	Gain.
From England			
To Valparaiso	9,130	8,500	630
" Callao	10,600	7,000	3,600
" Sandwich Islands . . .	14,500	8,500	6,000
From New York			
To Valparaiso	10,630	5,500	5,130
" Callao	12,100	4,000	8,100
" Sandwich Islands . .	16,000	5,500	10,500

In communicating with the Sandwich Islands, for instance, England has now an advantage, over the Atlantic States, of 1,500 miles in distance; build the canal, and these States have an advantage over England of 3,000 miles. If the comparison is made in respect to Callao and Valparaiso, the result is not less striking.[1]

Leaving out of view the circumstance, that our territories are no longer confined to the eastern coast of the Continent,

England, the United States have, for the last fifty years, been gradually gaining, until, at last, the contest has become so close that Great Britain is hardly a throat-latch ahead. Cut through the Isthmus, and the triumph will be complete. Instead, then, of meeting us in India, China, and even on our own Pacific coast, with the advantage of some ten day's sail or more, the scales will be turned, and we shall have the advantage of some twenty or thirty days, thus making a difference, under canvass, of thirty or forty days in our favor. Do you doubt, can any one doubt, the change which such a communication would produce in the commercial position of the two countries?" —*Lieut. Maury, Rep. Doc., 30th Cong. 1st Sess., No.* 145, *p*, 669.

[1] "There are eight milllions of people inhabiting the Pacific Coast; all of them want things which we have to sell. They are four or five months removed from us: open a communication across the Continent, and it will bring them within an average distance of less than thirty days."—*Lieut. Maury, Ib.* p. 667.

and looking to the results simply as affecting the Eastern States of the Confederacy, still, under this limited aspect, the opening of the proposed canal must give the United States the control of the trade of South America and Asia, and make her the first commercial nation of the globe. But there are other circumstances which powerfully favor this grand result. There are but few persons, even here, in the midst of the activity which it has created, who comprehend the fact, that the second commercial city of this country, with its fleets of ships and steamers, laden with a wealth compared with which that of the old galleons of Spain was trifling, exists at this hour upon the Pacific coast, in the State of California. Fewer still comprehend the results which are to follow from this great fact. It points surely and irrevocably to American predominance in the Pacific. We no longer look eastward, across two continents, to the great markets of Asia; our ships need no longer stretch their long and dreary way around the Cape of Good Hope, but may spread their exultant wings across an ocean, henceforth tributary to us alone, direct to the land of silks, and teas, and spices. Already Britain has obtained the odium, and the United States the benefit, of the opening of the markets of China. The carrying trade from that empire to every part of the world, even under present circumstances, from the greater economy and speed of American ships, must fall into American hands. And before Europe shall dream of the possibility of the enterprise, American steamers will be found plying between Canton, and San Francisco, and Panama. The opening of the markets of Japan, and a triumphant competition with the world, in the islands of the Indies, will be a speedy and natural consequence. The future is big with results like these—results more than probable, irrespective of the projected ship canal, and inevitable if it should ever be constructed.

For, communication direct and rapid, between the Atlantic

and Pacific States of the Confederacy, is a political as well as a commercial necessity, and must be effected, at whatever cost or hazard. That a communication of this kind will be opened within our own territories, wholly within our control, and free from the possibility of foreign interruption, may be regarded as certain, even though it shall require the annexation of the entire continent, as far south as the Isthmus of Panama. But it is not supposed that this alternative will be forced upon the country; for within its present limits it seems probable that the facilities for such a communication do now exist. From the head of Matagorda bay on the Gulf of Mexico, and from the head of the navigable waters of the Arkansas River, to the Port of San Diego, in California, is a distance of but little more than a thousand miles. The intervening country, whatever may be its deficiencies in other respects, is, topographically, highly favorable for the construction of a railroad. Politically, so far as the transmission of intelligence, and, in case of war, of military forces and supplies, is concerned, such a work would, probably, be adequate to the requirements of the nation. And hence, while our commerce is gathering strength, and the means for opening a passage by water, from one sea to the other, are accumulating, the people of the United States will exercise only the simplest prevision, and most ordinary caution, in speedily constructing a work so essential, not less to their future safety, than their present wants.[1]

[1] In 1830, the tonnage of Great Britain ammounted to 2,500,000 tons; the tonnage of the United States to 1,200,000 tons. In 1850, the tonnage of Great Britain was, in round numbers, 4,000,000 tons; that of the United States 3,500,000 tons. This is exclusive of the internal commercial marine of the United States, which is eight or ten times as great as that of Great Britain, and which, if included, as it probably should be, in estimating the relative commercial importance of the two countries, already entitles the United States to the first place amongst nations. The increase of British tonnage, during the past twenty years, has, therefore, been but little more

As compared with the maritime nations of Europe, therefore, and in respect to what may be called the Asiatic trade, I repeat, the United States would be the principal, if not the sole gainer, by the construction of a ship canal across the Isthmus of Nicaragua. So far as that trade is concerned, it is clearly not to the interest of those nations, to have this work undertaken; and he who counts upon their coöperation in carrying it through, manifests his own ignorance, alike of their past and present policy. Individual capital, in this age of the world, seeks investment wherever there is a promise of profitable returns; political considerations yield to natural laws; and patriotism, with men collectively, weighs little against private interest. It is precisely this reason, which renders it a matter of indifference whether the maritime nations of Europe, influenced by considerations of policy, jealous of American prosperity, or fearful of American power, regard the proposed work with favor or disfavor; their concurrence is not necessary to its realization. The policy of the United States may safely be predicated upon these considerations; and the opening of the canal pursued as a simple question of individual, national interest.

than *fifty per cent.;* while the increase of American tonnage has been upwards of *one hundred and fifty per cent.* The repeal of the Navigation Laws of Great Britain, will probably prevent a parallel increase of English tonnage during the next ten years; while it will tend to augment the ratio of American increase. In 1860, the United States will be the first maritime nation of the globe—the greatest the world has ever seen.

The opening of the British carrying trade has already called into existence a class of vessels, which must speedily monopolize it for themselves; viz: the American Clipper Ships. In point of capacity and speed, they are unapproachable. In the recent trial between the "Reindeer," the *chef d' œuvre* of British skill, and the American clipper "Oriental," from London to Hong Kong, the "Oriental," made the passage in 117 days, the "Reindeer" in 130! National predilection cannot prevent freights from taking the course which is speediest and cheapest. The whole of the East India carrying trade must, therefore, speedily fall into our hands.

The cheap common-places about millennial fraternization amongst nations, from the lips of sleek ambassadors, may tickle the ears of credulous and maudlin "philanthropists," and be suited to the large liberality of after-dinner companies; but it can never delude the sound, practical sense of the nation.[1] The arts of Delilah were not called into requisition to deprive Samson of his strength, until the power of the Philistines was found unavailable against him; and the gilded links of triple treaties and "joint protectorates, for the general welfare of mankind," will not be bound upon the massive limbs of the Great Republic of the West, the ultimate Regenerator of the World, until its rulers become corrupted, and the eyes of its people blinded to their tangible interests. We require no exterior aid in the construction of the proposed work, except such as we shall receive *in spite* of the policy of foreign governments, and through the operations of those laws which now direct the movements of capital—the laws of dividends.

In unequivocal English, we are most deeply interested in this work; we can ourselves construct it; we need no concurrence except that of the people through whose territories

[1] Sir George Seymour, a veteran diplomatist of thirty years' standing, in his recent examination before the Salaries Committee of the British Parliament, testified: "I consider that giving dinners is an *essential part of diplomacy*; I have no hesitation in saying so. I have no idea of a man being a good diplomatist who does not give good dinners!" (*Minutes*, 2261). And Sir Richard Packenham testified, before the same committee, that while he was in the United States, his dinners were better than the President's! Complacent Sir Richard! The "essential part" of the expenses of some recent British Legations would form a curious commentary upon Sir George's candid admission,—not better, perhaps, than the item which is denominated "Secret or Contingent Service!" There are other veteran diplomatists besides Sir George Seymour, and there are very great men among us, whose conduct, "on golden hinges turning," would greatly confirm Sir George's estimate of the diplomatic value of "good dinners!"

it must pass, and this we have in the fullest acceptation of the term. We wish its construction upon no narrow basis; we need no exclusive control over it, in order to secure its benefits, even though it were our desire to monopolize them, for they must accrue, if not to us alone, yet so largely in our favor, that no competition can either deprive us of them, or materially diminish their value. We have therefore nothing to fear from exterior opposition, nor to gain from foreign partnerships. The interest manifested by European governments in the international affairs of this continent, is wholly impertinent; it has its origin in fear and jealousy, and is directed to the sole object of crippling our strength,—not by force, for that would but knit the limbs and develop the muscles of the young giant, but by the specious and dangerous arts of diplomacy. It is easy for one nation to stipulate to refrain from doing what she could not do if she would, if thereby she binds her neighbor to abstain from doing what is not only feasible for her, but important to her prosperity and greatness. The skill of the ambassador who succeeds in seducing a great nation into the commission of such folly, is poorly recompensed by the paltry honor of knighthood.[1]

[1] An instance of this species of tactics, in which the old dodge of making a virtue of necessity is resorted to, with an exceedingly bad grace, but a prodigious, and almost ludicrous affectation of liberality and good faith, is afforded in the Clayton and Bulwer treaty, in which Great Britain magnanimously binds herself to abstain from doing what is both physically and financially impossible, namely, to "colonize" Central America, "control" and "exercise dominion over it," provided the United States will assent to the same conditions,—that is to say, refrain from annexing that country or any portion of it, even though it should be desired by each, and be essential to the welfare of both! The clause in the treaty of peace with Mexico, providing that none of the Mexican States shall be admitted into the American Union, except with the consent of the Mexican Central Government, was a suggestion jointly made to the Mexican Commissioners by the British and French Legations, with what disinterested object the reader can easily divine, although he may

But it is not by a comparative view of the value of the proposed work to the various maritime nations of the world, that its importance to the United States is to be estimated. It is not the ambition of this country to prosper at the expense of others; but to open by its own energy and enterprise new sources of wealth, and gather new elements of greatness. We would not that England or France were less, but that we may be superior to both.

The Pacific Ocean, as its name implies, is a placid sea, and upon its quiet waters, as I have already said, that powerful element of modern civilization, which received its first and most important, practical application on the waters of our own Hudson, seems destined to achieve its greatest triumphs. This result is indicated by a variety of circumstances. The islands of that ocean have been scattered with a wise reference to the wants of trade, under the new era which steam navigation has wrought in the intercourse between nations; and, by a series of events, the ultimate tendencies of which could not have been anticipated by those who participated in them most actively, those islands have been placed under influences, and in relations, which favor most strongly the interests, and meet most fully the requirements of the United States. The peaceable absorption of the Sandwich Islands

not comprehend the folly of a Senate which ratified the clause. As an appropriate pendant to the Clayton and Bulwer Treaty, the United States should propose one parallel in terms, substituting "India" instead of "the States of Central America," and observe the result. It might prove significant of the nature of British magnanimity, and would certainly illustrate the sincerity of British devotion to the principles so grandly put forward in the treaty above referred to. "You may have the crow, and I will take the turkey; or I will take the turkey, and you may have the crow," was the liberal alternative presented by the white hunter to his Indian companion, in dividing the spoils of the chase. The Indian reflected a moment, and then inquired, "Why you no talk turkey to me?" Equal reflection, it is timidly suggested, might be judiciously exercised in signing treaties, or at least in ratifying them.

within our confederacy, is an event near at hand, and as inevitable as the decrees of Heaven. The elastic power of our system has been fully tested, its vitality proved; and its ability to mould and harmonize vast masses of men into one consistent, vigorous whole, is no longer a question open to doubt, or admitting of discussion. The annexation of the Sandwich Islands, however pregnant with future results, may therefore be effected without any shock to our political constitution or civil organization; like the purchase of Florida and Louisiana, the annexation of Texas, and the purchase of California, it is an event reserved for the fulness of time, and will occur in the order which has been assigned to it by that Almighty Power whose controlling hand is indelibly stamped upon every page of our history.[1]

[1] The policy both of the Sandwich Islands and the United States has hitherto been, that the former should remain neutral and independent. Having far greater interests in those Islands than all other nations of the world combined, the United States has nevertheless been content that they should be common ground for all nations, at the same time she has declared that she could not permit them to be occupied by any European power. But recent events, and particularly the conduct of France, have shown, that while in their present condition, these islands are subject to constant and most unjustifiable insult and disturbance from European powers, to the injury of American, not less than native rights and interests.

"In 1849, on the flimsiest of pretexts, the French dismantled the forts of the island, and destroyed much public and private property. The grounds of these piratical attacks were simply contemptible. The duty on French brandies, it was said, was too high; some mischievous boys had mimicked a French priest, and had not been punished; a French whaler had been fined sixty-five dollars for violating port regulations; Catholic priests were not so much favored as Protestant; and the Government had the audacity to use the English language in its official communications!

"In December last, (1850,) a French commissioner, M. Perrin, arrived at Honolulu, in the frigate Sérieuse, and once more insisted on the above demands, with the addition of some others still more absurd. Perceiving the inutility of concessions, and that the French would be satisfied with nothing short of the virtual sovereignty of the group, the king and chiefs decided upon non-compliance, and to await the action of the French forces.

Facilities of intercourse and communication amongst men are the ligatures which bind them together; and with a corresponding improvement in these, no expansion of terri-

That American readers may fully understand the importance of French interests in the Hawaiian kingdom, it is only necessary to say that at this time, with the exception of the Catholic Missionaries, forced upon the islanders at the point of the bayonet, there are not a dozen Frenchmen in the group, and of them not an individual of any position. The only French commerce is an indirect one of a trifling amount from Valparais o, and the visits of a dozen whale-ships annually.

"The French authorities on this visit were disappointed in the results. The native population, independent of their chiefs, exasperated by a series of injuries, pertinaciously persisted in, had determined to resist the landing of the French forces. The numerous American and English residents, to a man, sympathized fully with them; and without their assistance the Hawaiians would have found no difficulty in driving the French back to their boats. But this would have subjected the town of Honolulu to a bombardment, and entailed, upon Americans in particular, a heavy loss in property. Fortunately, the United States ship Vandalia was in port, and was prepared to resist any act involving injury to American citizens. The French authorities, desirous of avoiding a collision with the American naval force, at last consented to patch up a provisional treaty, referring to the home government for further instructions. The upshot of this is, however, merely to give them time to mature their plans, and prepare a force which shall, without fail, secure the submission of the king. Knowing this, he, his chiefs, and people, have intimated to the American Government, it is said, their desire to be admitted into the Federal Union, reserving for themselves nothing further than security in their civil rights.

"If this be correct—and there seems to be no reason to doubt it—the offer is now made to the citizens of this Republic, as a free gift, of the entire Sandwich group, on such terms as Congress may impose. The islanders ask, in return, simply to receive the rights and protection accorded to American citizens. If this government does not avail itself of the opportunity thus presented, they may never again have a similar offer. The group, in territorial extent, is unimportant, its area being but 6,500 square miles, but it is capable of supporting tenfold its present population (80,000). It is the commercial and military key to the North Pacific, the central point from which radiate all the channels of commerce of that vast sea; possessing fine harbors, a fertile soil, and salubrious cli-

tory is to be dreaded. What men have hitherto been accustomed to call "opposition," or "conflict of interests," has no real existence; on the contrary, the best interests of all

mate, nothing is required but a stable government to make it the Cuba of the Pacific. It already consumes annually nearly $1,000,000 of American merchandize. Its American permanent population is not far from 1,000, possessing valuable sugar and coffee plantations, in which, and in other permanent improvements, large sums have been expended. A merchant of Boston is the proprietor of a sugar plantation on the island of Kauai, the cost of which was nearly $90,000.

"The American Board of Missions have expended somewhere near $1,500,000 in their operations, and have settled on the group fifty or more families, possessing valuable homesteads. The floating American population touching at these islands annually, is not far from 15,000, seamen and voyagers, from some 400 vessels. In short, American enterprise, both commercial and philanthropic, have invested the group with its present political importance—bestowed upon the inhabitants laws, religion, civilization, and will soon add to those gifts language—for the English tongue is rapidly superseding the Hawaiian. The islanders have thus a moral claim upon the American nation for protection. In no way can this be more efficiently bestowed, than by receiving them into the family of this great Republic. It is true the native population is melting away by the same untoward causes which have wasted away our Indians, but in a slower degree. Those that remain are as well prepared to be American citizens as the multitude of European emigrants. Unlike the generality of them, they can read and write, and have already acquired democratic ideas, under the operation of their own liberal constitution of government, which will readily enable them to incorporate themselves under our institutions. One fact is certain—the native population is destined to be supplanted in numbers and power by a foreign race. They desire us to be their successors and protectors. Shall we, or shall we not be? It can now be done, with the consent and urgent desire of all interested. It requires no outlay of money—the present revenues of the islands are more than adequate to the expenses of its government; time, opportunity, the interests alike of the inhabitants and ourselves point to this result. If all the facts bearing upon this question be presented to the people of the United States, a favorable response to the desire of the Hawaiians must be the result."

men, wherever and however situated, are in strict and entire harmony.

The Sandwich Islands are now but little further removed from the centre of the United States, than was New Orleans but twenty years ago; it is both easier and speedier to communicate, at this hour, with the capital of Nicaragua, than it was at that period with the capital of Ohio! Steamers, with the speed of twelve miles the hour, would go from New York, *via* the proposed canal:

To the Sandwich Islands in	20 days.
" Callao	18 "
" Valparaiso	20 "
" Canton	40 "
" Calcutta	46 "

But New York is not the United States. San Francisco is equally entitled to have this calculation made with reference to the distances from her magnificent bay to the points here named. Upon the same basis, the actual time requisite to go from San Francisco

To the Sandwich Islands would be . . .	9 days.
" Canton	30 "
" Calcutta	36 "

But the Sandwich Islands would probably be brought within a week's steaming of San Francisco; practically nearer than were the extremities of the State of New York, at the period of the Confederation![1]

It is known that coal, the grand essential to steam navigation, is found at various points upon both continents, and in

[1] The Steamer "Commodore Stockton," was to have sailed from San Francisco for Honolulu, on the 20th of June last,—the pioneer in the enterprise of opening steam communication across the Pacific, between the United States, and the nations of Asia.

the islands of the Pacific; but until these deposits are developed, our whaling fleets, passing from Atlantic ports, to the north-western seas, in the form of ballast alone, at rates merely nominal, are able to furnish a supply adequate to the wants of any line of steamers which may be established, to ply between San Francisco and the ports of China.

In treating of the proposed communication between the ocean, I have abstained from making any calculations respecting the augmentation of trade, which it is deemed would follow from it, for the simple reason that the past furnishes no standard whereon it can be estimated. The new elements which five years have introduced into our commercial relations, put all experience at fault; the dream of the speculator is found to be nearer the truth than the labored calculations of the man of statistics. In 1832, the exports of domestic cotton goods from the United States to the western coast of the continent, were less than six hundred bales; in 1847, they amounted to over twenty thousand bales; in 1848, to more than thirty thousand; and in 1850, to upwards of one hundred thousand! In 1832, we received from the same coast products, collectively, not exceeding $3,000,000 in value; in 1850, in gold alone, not less than $50,000,000! And this enormous sum, there is reason to believe, will this year be more than doubled.

There is, nevertheless, one branch of industry or trade, and that neither the most important nor the most profitable of those which engage the attention of our people, in respect to which we may make some approximate calculations, illustrating, from one point of view, alike the importance of our interests in the Pacific, and the advantage of a ship canal between the oceans.

The capital annually employed in the whale fishery of the United States, is upwards of $15,000,000; and in 1849, the number of vessels engaged in its prosecution was 613, carrying, in round numbers, 200,000 tons. For nine years the

average annual product of this fishery has been, 141,242 barrels of sperm; 235,456 barrels of whale oil; and 2,324,578 pounds of bone; in aggregate value amounting annually to $7,356,142. It is estimated that fully two thirds of the vessels, and three fourths of the tonnage of the whaling fleet, are engaged in the Pacific, and that three fourths of the product of the fishery comes from thence; that is to say, 400 vessels, carrying 150,000 tons, and producing $5,520,000. It has been calculated, by competent hands, that, allowing for wear and tear of ships, expenses of manning, victualling, and sailing, interest on capital invested, insurance, loss on products detained by length of voyage, leakage, etc. etc., that the gross profits do not more than equal one-fifth of the gross returns, i. e., $1,150,000. One third of the time occupied in each whaling voyage, it is calculated, is lost in going to and from the whaling seas, *via* Cape Horn. By the construction of the proposed canal, in the saving of time, wages, and other expenses, saving of insurance and interest, quicker returns, increased amount of actual fishing, it is estimated, by the same competent hands, that the gross returns would be quite $7,000,000, of which amount, not less than $3,300,000 would be gross profits! Assuming these calculations to be true, the actual augmentation of the wealth of the country, from this source alone, would equal two millions of dollars per annum.

The value of the proposed work, therefore, is not so much in the saving of time and money in the departments of trade already established, but in the new sources of wealth which it shall develop. Hitherto the tide of emigration has flowed into our country from the east; still Europe pours her thousand stalwart men per day into the single port of New York; the forests bow before the advancing column of labor; roads, canals, and railways mark its steps; wealth and strength are developed in its path. But the New World is no longer the land of hope and promise to the Celt and Teuton alone; from

the far off empires of the Orient, the once enigmatical Cathay, come the men of other races, to aid in the solution of the grand problem which Time and Heaven are working out within our borders.[1] Amongst the most industrious, inoffensive, and valuable of our citizens in California, is the Chinaman.[2] Inured to industry, educated in the strictest subordi-

[1] The following table shows the number of foreign emigrants who arrived at the port of New York for the week ending July 14th.

From Ireland	3,723	From Sweden	1
Germany	2,280	Denmark	5
England and Wales	1,294	Italy	2
Scotland	597	West Indies	5
France	127	Nova Scotia	1
Spain	2	South America	9
Switzerland	106	Canada	2
Norway	521	Poland	4
Total for one week			8,679

This, it should be understood, is not an exceptional week, but one taken at random, and not above the average. On the 29th of July, (a single day,) 5,811 emigrants arrived; and during the entire month, 33,854. It is probable that the emigration to this single port, for 1851, will reach nearly or quite four hundred thousand.

For the two weeks ending August 14, the arrivals amounted to 28,000; on the 15th alone, they were 2,338; and for the month of September, 38,726.

[2] "Within a week past, nearly five hundred Chinese emigrants have arrived upon our shores, all in two ships, hale and hearty. They remain but a day or two in our city, and are then off to the mines—first buying a pickaxe, shovel, and a few necessary mining tools, and not a few of them drop their own native 'rig,' and equip themselves in a pair of thick heavy cowhide boots, in lieu of their wooden shoes. Besides, many of them dress up in the real Yankee style—all of which is good for trade! One feature in regard to this class of foreigners is, that even the *celestials* are rapidly acquiring our own language. This was convincing evidence to my mind that they had been sent here for good."—*Letter to the Journal of Commerce, dated San Francisco, May* 15.

nation to the laws, thrifty in his habits, he is well adapted to the peculiar condition of that wide region, where labor is now the grand, I had almost said, the sole requisite to wealth and greatness. What the German and the Irishman have accomplished for the eastern slope of our mighty country, the Chinaman seems destined to achieve for its western. He is more patient and persevering than either, and is perhaps best adapted to occupy that position which in Europe is assigned to what is called "the laboring population," but which here carries with it nothing of odium, but, on the contrary, is a claim to respect. China is over-crowded; her land is stocked to its utmost capacity; and millions of her people pass their entire lives on floats built on the waters; she numbers 400,000,000 of people—a population greater than that of Europe. The system under which this vast number of men have lived and flourished for thousands of years must necessarily have many sound and stable elements, which, engrafted upon those recognized under our own system, or developed by the circumstances of our past condition, can only result in good. The great necessity of popular education is nowhere in the world so completely recognized as in China. Common schools existed there, while all that Europe had of learning was confined to the pedants of the monasteries. Education was there made the standard of civil preferment, of dignity, and power, before the Goth and the Vandal swept down from the forests of the north upon the plains of Italy,—before European civilization had its birth. Religious intolerance has no place in the Chinese character; obedience, strict obedience to the laws, is the first lesson in his education, and the principal article in his political creed. Industry is inculcated as a duty; to be idle is alone discreditable. From such a source as this, the Pacific United States seem destined to draw a large part of their future population; with what precise result no man can tell, but undoubtedly one favorable, as I have before said, to the solution of the

great civil, social, and moral problems involved in the future history of this continent.[1]

It may not, at first glance appear, even admitting the likelihood of large emigration from Asia, how that circumstance is likely to affect the proposed canal. But whatever shall tend to develop the resources of the Pacific States, or bring us in more intimate relations with China, must necessarily augment the use, and consequently the prospective value of this work; which, in its turn, must contribute towards encouraging that very emigration from which it is to derive a means of support and profit. Our own country is full of examples, where works of public utility, projected and built in regions almost uninhabited, have, within a few years, derived a profitable support from the farms, the manufactories, the towns, and the cities which they themselves called into existence. By this species of reciprocal action is wealth created; not in an arithmetical but a geometrical ratio; and thus will the construction of this great work operate upon the interests of the United States.

[1] Humboldt, after considering the proposed canal under its commercial aspect, hints at its probable political consequences. He observes, that the state of modern civilization is such "that the trade of the world can undergo no great changes that are not felt in the organization of society;" and inclines to the belief that as soon as this canal is built, "Eastern Asia, at present insulated and secure from attack, will inevitably enter into more intimate connection with the nations of the European race. It may be said," he adds, "that the neck of land against which the equinoctial current breaks, has been the bulwark of the independence of China and Japan. In penetrating further into futurity, imagination dwells upon the conflict between powerful nations, eager to obtain exclusive advantages from the way opened to the commerce of the two worlds."—(*Personal Narrative*, vol. vi., p. 297.) The acquisition and settlement of California, however, have entirely changed the political aspect of the question of the canal. California has made the United States principal to that work; and there is no extremity to which she will not go, in preserving the transit *free* to her commerce and her citizens.

There is one other consideration which should not be overlooked in this connection. It is the possibility of the opening of a ship canal, or other effective means of communication, between the Mediterranean and Red Seas, whereby the benefits resulting from a canal across our own Continent would be anticipated, and in great part, monopolized by other and rival nations. That such an undertaking is not impossible, is sufficiently well established by the fact that, a canal was actually built, by the Ptolemies and the Arabian Caliphs. The remains of that stupendous work were discovered, and its course distinctly traced by the French Engineers who accompanied the Egyptian Expedition. It may be conceded that the savage violence of Eastern nations, and the deadly jealousies of European powers, will effectually prevent the reöpening of this line of communication between Europe and Eastern and Southern Asia.[1] We may safely, for the present, rely upon the retarding operations of European systems, to prevent the undertaking of a work, by which so

[1] "The principal obstacles to the realization of this project," said the late distinguished Henry Wheaton, in a despatch to the Department of State, "are not natural but political obstacles. France and Great Britain have been constant rivals for influence and power in Egypt, ever since the invasion of that country by Bonaparte; and especially since the rupture of the Treaty of Amiens, in 1803, which turned upon the *ultimatum* of the British Cabinet demanding the possession of Malta, as a bulwark against the renewal of that attempt by the French, and as a consequent security to the British dominions in the East Indias. We have seen this rivalship threatening to disturb the harmony of the two powers, during the negotiations relating to the affairs of the East, in 1840. In the meantime the British had silently taken possession of Aden, at the mouth of the Red Sea. And the occupation of Algiers by France was, and still is contested, silently, if not openly, by Great Britain, upon the ground that, if the French gain permanent footing in North Africa, it may ultimately lead the way to the reconquest of Egypt. These mutual jealousies have been manifested in the divergent lines pursued by the French and English diplomatic agents, respecting the passage to the Indies, by way of the Red Sea."

much might be gained; yet we should not lose sight of the fact that, the French Engineers who planned the proposed canal across the Isthmus of Suez, have satisfactorily shown that it would save one third in distance, and nearly as much in time, in navigating from her ports to the Coromandel coast of India—thus increasing still more, as compared with Europe, the physical disadvantage under which the United States labors, in respect to the Oriental trade. Nor should the significant fact that, Gibraltar, the key to the Mediterranean, and Aden, commanding the Red Sea, are both in the hands of our greatest and most unscrupulous rival. The manner in which Great Britain seized upon Aden, has its almost exact parallel in the seizure of San Juan. Situated at the mouth of the Red Sea, it controls the entrance, and, as a consequence, the commerce which may pass through it, as effectually as San Juan, situated at the mouth of the river of the same name, controls that stream, and the passage through the lakes and the grand basin of Nicaragua. It is one of the three important points indicated by the great Portuguese Conquerer Albuquerque, as essential to command and monopolize the commerce of the East.[1] The object of the seizure

[1] These three points, as designated by Albuquerque's son, in his account of his father's life, were, Malacca, the centre of Asiatic commerce at that period; Ormus, at the mouth of the Persian Gulf, and Aden, in the straits of Babelmandel. "Had the King of Portugal secured a strong position, by taking possession of Aden, as he had done of Ormus and Malacca, he might, by means of this dominion over the three seas, consider himself lord of the world, as did Alexander when he reached the Ganges; since, with these three keys, the passages are shut to all other nations."—*Commentaries of the Great Alfonso d' Albuquerque*, vol. iv., p. 217.

This great conquerer would have turned the course of the Nile into the Red Sea, and made the fertile delta of Egypt a desert, in order to realize this gigantic project of commercial monopoly, and prevent the Venetians from trading with the East Indies, through Egypt. See his remarkable address to his troops, at the attack on Malacca, *Commentaries*, vol. iii., p. 133.

of Aden, was also identical with that which led to the seizure of San Juan—the two atrocities reflect light, one upon the other, and should caution us against permitting any interference, on the part of Great Britain, or any other power, upon any pretext, however plausible, in the project of the Nicaraguan canal.[1] That interference will not be directed to the construction of the work, but to its obstruction; not to the promotion of general commercial interests, but to the prevention of American supremacy in the Pacific.

[1] "But whatever doubts," observes Mr. Wheaton, in a despatch to the Department of State, distinguished for its research and comprehension of American interests, in connection with this subject, "But whatever doubts may exist as to the relative advantages of shortening the passage to the East Indies from west to east, to the different nations interested in the commerce of Asia, there can be none as to the advantages which would be derived to the United States from shortening the passage from east to west. In this question is involved, not only the direct, but the indirect intercourse with the East Indies. * * * * * * * * * * The opening a water communication from one sea to the other, thus becomes a matter of vital importance to us. Our national interests, commercial, political, and social, are all involved in the question. The necessity of competing with other rival nations, for the new trade now opened with the 'Celestial Empire,' from which the veil of mystery has been rudely withdrawn, and which has been compelled to abandon its anti-social principles of non-intercourse with foreigners; of extending our established commerce with the western coasts of the two American continents, and the Polynesian archipelago; of giving increased facilities to the whale fishery, and of establishing a more convenient communication, by sea, with our territories beyond the rocky mountains, and our naval stations in the Pacific ocean—all these circumstances combine to augment the importance and urgency of this great question. A new and vastly increased interest has been given to the subject, by the measures adopted by our government, for establishing diplomatic intercourse with China, and the independent isles of the Pacific, and by the extended schemes of colonization recently developed by Great Britain and France in Australasia, New Zealand, the Marquesas, and Tahiti."

ABORIGINES OF NICARAGUA.

ABORIGINES OF NICARAGUA.

CHAPTER I.

ABORIGINAL NATIONS OF NICARAGUA; THEIR GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION; LANGUAGES, AND MONUMENTS.

The present condition of the Indians of Nicaragua may be very easily inferred from what I have had occasion to say of them in the preceding pages. They have now very completely assimilated with their conquerers, to a great extent intermarried with them, adopted their religion and language, and have taken an entirely new position, both in respect to themselves and the world at large, from that which they occupied at the time of the discovery of America, in the fifteenth century. But it cannot prove uninteresting to the general reader to know something of their former condition, before the infusion of European elements amongst them, when they were governed by laws and institutions originating with themselves, and by religious systems of indigenous growth. And here we are compelled to rely upon the accounts of the early Spanish adventurers, often vague, and sometimes contradictory; upon the few monumental records which time and religious zeal have spared, and upon the fragmentary traditions, and imperfect vocabularies, which are still preserved amongst them. The fullest and most reliable chronicle is that of Gonzalez Fernandez de Oviedo y Valdez, historiographer of the Indies to the King

of Spain, who visited Nicaragua in 1526, within four years after its discovery by Gil Gonzalez de Avila. Some portions of his account were used by Herrara, in the compilation of his History of Spanish America, who seems also to have had access to some other sources of information, with which we are unacquainted. Oviedo's chronicle was, nevertheless, never published in the original: nor does its existence appear to have been known until 1839, when it was discovered by that indefatigable scholar, TERNEAU COMPANS, who procured a copy of the MS. from Spain, and translated and published it in his invaluable series of Original Voyages and Relations concerning America.[1]

Besides the accounts of Oviedo, and the detached, compiled chapters of Herrara, we have some references to the aborigines of Nicaragua in Torquemada's "Monarquia Indiana," in the History of D. Carlos de Alva Ixtlixochitl, and in the later work of Gage, published in 1680. Don Andreas Cerezeda, who accompanied Gil Gonzalez de Avila, as King's Treasurer, when he penetrated into Nicaragua in 1522, communicated the outlines of the expedition, with some account of the country and its inhabitants, to Peter Martyr, which were incorporated by him in the third and fourth chapters of the sixth of his celebrated Decades.

The monuments of the country have never been described until now, nor does their existence seem to have been known to the world previously to my own explorations there. Neither does it appear that, beyond a few words of the language of the Niquirans, vocabularies of any of the languages had, up to that time, been procured. The latter deficiency has been very poorly supplied by the imperfect

[1] The copy in the original Spanish, which he possessed, is now in the library of Mr. Peter Force, of Washington, whose enlightened zeal, in collecting such materials as may serve to illustrate the history of the United States and of America, is only equalled by the broad liberality with which he permits their use by all to whom they may be valuable.

ones which it was my good fortune to obtain; but beyond these fragments, nothing remains to us of the languages of Nicaragua.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION.

My personal observations upon the aborigines of Nicaragua were almost wholly confined to the region around the great lakes of the interior; a region unerringly marked out by the circumstances of geographical position and physical conformation, as the theatre of vaster enterprises than human daring has hitherto conceived, or human energy yet attempted. Here nature has lavished her richest gifts, and assumed her most magnificent forms—high volcanoes, gentle slopes, level plains, and broad and beautiful lakes and rivers are here combined with a fertility of soil and a salubriousness of climate probably unsurpassed by any equal extent of country under the tropics. These were conditions eminently favorable for bringing together primitive communities of men, and for nurturing and sustaining a vast population. That it did so, we have the testimony of all the early chroniclers; and he who has passed over its broad plains and luxuriant slopes, and observed its attractions and resources, will be prepared to credit the assertion of the pious Las Casas, that it was "one of the best peopled countries in all America."

"The great fertility of the soil," says this early author, "the goodness of its air, and the vast number of its inhabitants, cannot be sufficiently expressed. There were cities there four leagues in length. The great quantities of excellent fruits that grow there, drew together these multitudes of people. Their cities were situated in vast plains, and the people, having no mountains near in which to hide themselves, besides, the climate being so sweet, and the country so agreeable, that the inhabitants could not easily resolve to quit it, they were consequently more exposed than those of

other countries, to the persecution and outrages of the Spaniards."[1]

From the testimony of the early explorers, from the monuments, and other existing sources of information, we know that the Indians of Nicaragua were then, as now, divided into two widely separated, if not radically distinct families, corresponding very nearly with the natural divisions of the country.

Upon the low alluvions, and amongst the dense, dank forests of the Atlantic coast, there existed a few, scanty, wandering tribes, maintaining a precarious subsistence by hunting and fishing, with little or no agriculture, destitute of civil organizations, with a debased religion, and generally corresponding with the Caribs of the islands, to whom they sustained close affinities. Of these rude tribes it is not my present purpose to speak. A portion of their descendants, still further debased by the introduction of negro blood, may still be found in the wretched Moscos or Mosquitos, who, by a brazen fraud, are attempted to be passed off upon the world as a sovereign nation, comprehending the duties, and capable of fulfilling the requirements of government! The few and scattered Melchoras, on the river San Juan, are certainly of Carib stock, and it is more than probable that the same is true of the Woolwas, Ramas, Toacas, and Poyas, and also of the other tribes on the Atlantic coast, further to the southward,

[1] *An Account of the first Voyages and Discoveries made by the Spaniards in America.* By Don Bartholomew de las Casas, Bishop of Chiapas, (edition 1699,) p. 28.

"There is not in all the Indies," says Oviedo, "a country more fertile, and better cultivated than this. The climate is healthy and agreeable, the waters excellent, game and fish abundant. They harvest maize and fruits in vast quantities, and among the fruits is a kind of prunes from which they make delicious wine. They have trees which distil liquid amber, and cacao from which is made an excellent beverage. There are many deer, and *dantas* (tapirs), wild boars, and great numbers of birds."

towards Chiriqui Lagoon, and collectively denominated Bravos.

In the more elevated and salubrious regions around the great lakes of the interior, and upon the slopes of the Pacific, on the other hand, the natives had many features in common with the semi-civilized nations of Mexico, Guatemala, and Yucatan, and had made many advances in the same direction with them. Like these, they were divided into numerous tribes, or small sovereignties, with separate and independent chiefs or councils of government. With the single exception of those inhabiting the narrow strip of land between Lake Nicaragua and the Pacific, and who had also spread to the principal islands of the Lake, they appear to have been essentially one people, with like habits and customs, a common religion, and speaking, if not the same language, probably dialects of the same language.

The exception to which I here refer, is one of the most remarkable facts in the history of the American aborigines. The inhabitants of this narrow isthmus, between the lake and ocean, were Mexicans, speaking the ancient Mexican language, and having a civil and social organization, as also a system of religion, identical with those which prevailed amongst the Aztecs and their affiliated nations. The evidence upon this point, furnished by my own investigations in the country, is conclusive, and will shortly appear. It is only necessary here to say that this fact is sustained by the positive testimony of the historian Oviedo, who was in the country in the years immediately succeeding the conquest, and who speaks from his own personal knowledge. His language is as follows: "The *Niquirans*," i. e. the inhabitants of the district between the lake and ocean, "who speak the Mexican language, have the same manners and appearance as the people of New Spain."

The remaining inhabitants of Nicaragua, this authority divides into two stocks, viz: those speaking the Chorotegan

language and its dialects, and the Chontals or Condals. The first of these, or the *Chorotegans*, occupied the entire country north of the Niquirans, extending along the Pacific Ocean, between it and Lake Managua, to the borders, and probably for a distance along the shores of the Gulf of Fonseca. They also occupied the country south of the Niquirans, and around the Gulf of Nicoya, then called Orotina. These were again separated into several divisions, all speaking the Chorotegan language, or dialects of it:

I. The Dirians, or "people of the hills," who occupied the territory lying between the upper extremity of Lake Nicaragua, the river Tipitapa, and the southern half of Lake Managua and the Pacific, whose principal towns were situated where now stand the cities of Granada, then (called Salteba,) Masaya, and Managua, and the villages of Tipitapa, Diriomo, and Dirianba. According to Oviedo they were true Chorotegans.

II. The Nagrandans, or people of Nagrando, those speaking the Nagrandan dialect. They occupied what is now called the Plain of Leon, or the district between the northern extremity of Lake Managua and the Pacific. The name is preserved in that of the City of Leon, which is still sometimes called Leon de Nagrando.

III. The Cholutecans, speaking the Cholutecan dialect, situated to the northward of the Nagrandans, and extending along the Gulf of Fonseca, into what is now the territory of Honduras. A town and river in the territory here indicated, still bear the name of Choluteca, which however is a Mexican name.

IV. The Orotinans, occupying the country around the Gulf of Nicoya, and to the southward of Lake Nicaragua.

Concerning the Indians of the Chorotegan stock, Oviedo observes, that they were the enemies of the Niquirans, and that "their languages, manners, customs and ceremonies were so different," as to be utterly incomprehensible to the

other. He nevertheless adds, that their religion was the same; and here it may be observed that all the religions of the semi-civilized nations of the central parts of the continent approximated to a common type.

The *Chondals* or *Chontals*, the third great division mentioned by Oviedo, occupied the wide, mountainous region, still bearing the name of Chontales, situated to the northward of Lake Nicaragua, and midway between the nations already named and the savage hordes bordering the Caribbean Sea, to whom, it is possible, they may have in some degree assimilated. "These Indians," says Oviedo, "have no connection with the Chorotegans and Niquirans, and speak a language as different from theirs as the Basque is from the German." He nevertheless leaves the inference that their religion was very much the same. Herrara adds, that they were "a mountainous people and clownish;" and I am informed by the Abbe Brasseur de Bourbourg, that the name itself, in one of the Maya dialects, signifies "strangers," or people from abroad.

The chroniclers seem to agree in representing the Chorotegans as the original occupants and predominating family in the country, the *autochthones*. "Those speaking the Chorotegan language," says Oviedo, "are the aborigines of the country, and its ancient masters." Herrara asserts that among them, those speaking the Cholutecan language were "the original and most ancient, held the estates, and had the cacoanuts, which were the money and wealth of the country." It is difficult to understand what is meant by this observation, unless it is that there existed among the people a class arrogating, like the Incas, a superiority over the others, and speaking a "court language," or one in some respects differing from theirs.

It seems therefore that, at the time of the discovery, there existed in Nicaragua two grand families of Indians, whose

probable relations and subdivisions are exhibited in the following table:

I—SEMI-CIVILIZED.		II—SAVAGE.	
Chrotegans;	*Dirians,* *Nagrandans,* *Orotinans.*	Caribs.	Embracing the Waiknas, or Moscos, Melchoras, Woolwas, Toacas, Poyas, and the other detached tribes situated on the Caribbean Sea, and to the east and southward of the Gulf of Nicoya.
Cholutecans;	*A Mexican Colony.*		
Niquirans;	*A Mexican Colony.*		
Chondals;	Approximating to the Savage tribes.		

Oviedo informs us that there were five totally distinct languages spoken in Nicaragua, and Gomera enumerates them as follows, viz: the Niquiran or Mexican, the Chorotegan, Orotinan, Chondal, and Caribisi, or Carib. The general, geographical distribution of these languages will be inferred from what has already been said of the distribution of the various aboriginal stocks in Nicaragua. The Chondal, according to Hervas, extended as far as Oaxaca. This could not have been the fact, unless it was identical with, or closely related to, the Maya, Quiche, Poconchi, and Huasteca: which hardly harmonizes with the concurrent testimony of the chroniclers, that the Chondals were an exceedingly rude people, speaking a rude language.

LANGUAGES.

Previous to my visit to Nicaragua, no vocabularies of any of these languages were in existence. From the Indians of Subtiaba, near Leon, in the north-western part of the country, I procured a vocabulary of about two hundred words: and another vocabulary of about the same number of words, from the Indians of Masaya, a hundred miles to the southward of Leon, and in the territory immediately adjoining that which we know was occupied by the Niquirans, or the Mexican Colony. These two languages have no verbal resem-

blances, whatever similarity may have existed in their grammatical features; and as Oviedo, in one or two places says expressly that, the Indians around the Lake of Masaya spoke the Chorotegan language, we are driven to the conclusion that that which was spoken near Leon was the Orotinan. This was undoubtedly spoken by the Indians south of the Niquirans, around the Gulf of Orotina, where the volcano of Oroti, or Orosi, still perpetuates their name.

But until we have vocabularies, from the known seats of the Orotinans, I shall not venture to call the language which was spoken on the Plain of Leon by that name. Meantime, I prefer to call it, from the aboriginal name of that district, *Nagrandan*. The language of which I procured a vocabulary at Masaya, following the authority of Oviedo, I have called Chorotegan, or Dirian. Oviedo gives but one word of this language, viz: *nanbi*, dog, which is the precise word still retained. Some of the names of places and natural objects within the area in which this language was spoken, seem to have a relationship to certain Peruvian names. Thus Momobacho, Momotombo, and others, sound wonderfully like Moyobamba, Tambobamba, Guamabacho, etc. It would be interesting to take up the suggestion, and inquire whether there is really any relationship between the languages of Peru and Central America; but this I have not now the means of doing.

From the Indians yet residing on the Island of Ometepec, I procured, with great difficulty, a few words, and some of their numerals. This island was occupied by the Niquirans, and the words which I recovered coincide precisely with the Mexican. Indeed the very name of this island, distinguished for two high volcanic peaks, is pure Mexican, *Ome*, two, and *tepec*, mountain.

The region of Chontales was visited by my friend Mr. Julius Frœbel, in the summer of this year (1851). He penetrated to the head waters of the Rio Mico, Escondido, or Bluefields,

where he found the Indians to be agriculturists, partially civilized, and generally speaking the Spanish language. They are called Caribs by their Spanish neighbors, but have themselves a vague tradition that they came originally from the shores of Lake Managua. Mr. Frœbel procured a brief vocabulary of their original language, which, however, seems to have little affinity to any of the languages spoken elsewhere in the country, on the coast, or in the interior. I have given it the name of Chondal, from the fact that it exists in the district of Chontales, and to distinguish it from the others. It may be questioned whether it is the true Chondal (or what the early writers called by that name), or even a dialect of it.

The following brief table comprises words from the various languages ascertained to have existed in Nicaragua. A few words of Mexican have been introduced to facilitate comparison with the Niquiran, which, however, is really Mexican, differing from the latter in no essential respect, except that the terminals *tl* or *tli* are contracted or wholly omitted.

COMPARATIVE TABLE.

English.	Nagrandan	Chorotegan, or Duran.	Niquiran.	Mexican.	Waikna, or Moscan.	Chondal?
God	———	gopaseme	teot	teotl	———	———
Man	rahpa	nuho	tlacat	tlacatl	waikna	all
Woman	rapaku	naseyomo	ciuat	ciuatl	mairen	yall
Head	a'cu	goochemo	tzonteco	totzontecon	lel	tunni
Foot	naku	graho	hixt	icxitl	mena	calni
Dog	romao	nambi	izcuindi	itzcuintli	yul	sulo
Deer	———	numbongame	mazat	mazatl	sula	———
Rabbit	———	———	toste	tochtli	kaia	———
Fire	ahku	nahu	tlet	tletl	panta	cuh
Water	eeia	nimbu	at	atl	lia	wass?
House	guah	nahngu	calli	calli	watla	u
Maize	ehpe	nahma	centl	centli	aya	———
Rain	unde	coprinumbi	quiavit	quianitl	li	———
Flower	———	nele	xochit	xochtli	———	———
Wind	neena	neshtu	hecat	ehecatl	pasa	uing
Snake	apu	nule	coat	coatl	piuta	———
Eagle	———	moonkoyo	cate	quauili	———	———
Flint	eese	nugo	topecat	tecpatl	walpa	———
Mountain	———	diria	tepec	tepec	———	asang
One	imba	teka	ce	ce	kumi	alaslaj
Two	apu	nah	ome	ome	wal	muysbu
Three	asu	ho	ye	yei	niupa	muyebas
Four	acu	hahome	nau	naui	wal wal	muyerunca
Five	hiusu	———	macuil	macuilli	matasip	muyesinca?

Of what I have called *Chorotegan*, or *Dirian*, I was only able to procure the vocabulary, which is presented on a subsequent page; but of the *Nagrandan*, after much trouble, and through the assistance of my friend, Col. Francisco Diaz Zapata, I obtained some of the grammatical rules and forms of construction, and to this language the following remarks are applicable.

Neither the article nor the preposition is expressed. The man speaks, *rahpa-data*. The rage of the dog, *gahu-romoa*. Dog with rage, *romoa-gahu*. Beauty of the woman, *musa-rapaku*. Woman with beauty, *rapaku-musa*.

The plural is formed by adding *nu* to the singular, thus: *ruscu*, bird; *ruscunu*, birds; *eshe*, tree; *eshenu*, trees.

The degrees of comparison seem to have been indicated by prefixes, of which, however, there are but two, equivalent, in their signification, to more and most, and to better and best. They are *mah*, better or more, *pooru* or *puru*, best or most. For example:

Meheña *good.*
mah-meheña *better-good, or more good.*
puru-meheña *best good, or most good.*

Deficiency or diminution, was expressed by *ai* or *mai*, thus: *ai-meheña* or *mai-meheña*, bad, or lacking-good.

Of a man fair of complexion, or what they understand to be of better complexion than another, i. e., a better man, *mah-rahpa*. To run is *dagalnu* or *nagagnu*, and runner is *dagalni;* fast runner, *mah-dagalni;* very fast runner, *puru-dagalni*. *Ahmba*, old; *mah-ahmba* or *ahmba-nu*, older, or more old; *puru-ahmba*, very old. In the Mexican, this is effected by reduplication, as *hue*, old, *hue-hue*, old-old, or very old. The word *amba* or *'mba*, sometimes has the value of great, and as such it appears in the numerals; thus *diño*, ten, *diñoamba*, great ten, or old ten, i. e., the first power of ten, or one hun-

dred. *Tahi* is small; *chichi*, very small. In the combinations of these, and also of *ahmba* or *amba*, as in the Mexican, the final syllable only is used. Thus *egni*, fish; *egnimba*, big fish; *egnihi*, little fish; *egnichi*, very little fish.

The pronouns are as follows:—

I,	*icu.*	Those,	*caguinu.*
We, (m)	*hechelu.*	This, (m)	*cala.*
We, (f)	*hecheri.*	This, (f)	*hala.*
Thou,	*ica.*	These, (m)	*cadchinulu.*
Ye, (m)	*hechela.*	These, (f)	*cadchici.*
Ye, (f)	*hechelai.*	Mine, (m)	*cugani.*
He,	*icau.*	Mine, (f)	*icagani.*
She,	*icagui.*	Yours, (m)	*cutani.*
They, (m)	*icanu.*	Yours, (f)	*icatani.*
They, (f)	*icagunu.*	His,	*cagani.*
That,	*cagui.*		

I could not procure a complete paradigm of any verb. Col. Zapata furnished me with the following, embracing some of the inflexions of the verbs, *sa*, to be, and *aiha*, to come. I am a little skeptical about the accuracy of the future tenses of *sa*.

SA——TO BE.

Present.

SINGULAR.		PLURAL.	
I am,	sá.	We are,	so.
Thou art,	sá.	Ye are,	soa.
He is,	sá.	They are,	sula.

Imperfect.

I was,	caná.	We were,	cananá.
Thou wast	caná.	Ye were,	cananoá.
He was,	caná.	They were,	lacananá.

Preterite Definite.

SINGULAR.		PLURAL.	
I was,	sá cá.	We were,	sá cuá.
Thou wast,	sachu.	Ye were,	sá cuahi.
He was,	sa cá.	They were,	sa gahu.

Pluperfect.

I had been,	mucasini.	
Thou hadst been,	mucanasini.	[*Plural the same.*]
He had been,	mucanasadini.	

Future Absolute.

I shall be,	lamauambi.	We shall be,	lamananna.
Thou wilt be,	same.	Ye will be,	lamananna.
He will be,	same.	They will be,	lamana.

Future Anterior.

I shall have been,	malamana.	We shall have been,	lamana.
Thou wilt have been,	lama.	Ye will have been,	lamala.
He will have been,	lama.	They will have been,	lamalahi.

AIHA, TIHA, OR AHIHA——TO COME.

Present.

I come,	icunaha.	We come,	hechelunagubia.
Thou comest,	icanaha.	Ye come,	hechelaguhala.
He comes,	icannaha.	They come,	icagunuguha.

Imperfect.

I did come,	icunahalu.	We did come,	hechelunagubalú.
Thou didst come,	icanahacha.	Ye did come,	hechelanaguabala.
He did come,	icaunahalu.	They did come,	icagunaguhalu.

Perfect.

I came,	icusanaha.	We came,	hechelusagualalu.
Thou camest,	icasanacaha.	Ye came,	hechelasagualala.
He came,	icausahalu.	They came,	icaguinasagunhulu.

Pluperfect.

I had come,	icusehisalu.	We had come,	hechelunigualalu
Thou hadst come,	icaschisahala.	Ye had come,	hechelaniguilala.
He had come,	icausahalu.	They had come.	icaguinusehisagunhula.

Future Absolute.

I shall come,	icugaha.	We shall come,	hecheluguha.
Thou wilt come,	icaguhacha.	Ye will come,	hechulagualala.
He will come,	icaugaha.	They will come.	icaugnugunhualu.

Future Anterior.

I shall have come,	icuvihiluniha.	We shall have come,	hechehivihiluingualalu.
Thou wilt have come,	icavihilunechala.	Ye will have come,	hechulavihilunigula.
He will have come,	icauguivihiluniahalu.	They will have come.	icauinushenigunhualu.

Imperative.

Come thou,	ahiyaica.	Let us come,	ahiyohecheu.
Let him come,	gahahagui.	Let them come.	gunhuaganeñu.

Conditional Present.

I should come,	icugahalu.	We should come,	hechelugualalu.
Thou wouldst come,	icagahachala.	Ye would come,	hechalamagualama.
He would come,	icaugahalu.	They would come.	icauguinumagnuhuama.

Second Conditional Past.

If I had come,	icumahaluvihilu.	If we had come,	hechelumainueamaguiha.
If thou hadst come,	icamaimacha.	If ye had come,	hechelamagunhunuma.
If he had come,	icauguimaimaha.	If they had come,	icauguinasohimisaguhua.

I am not prepared to say that the above inflexions are altogether correct; I nevertheless give them as they were communicated to me. I can only add to the above, from my own knowledge,

Daiya, to see ;
Sadaiyama, to have seen ;
Daiyanga, seeing.

Dahta, to speak ;
Dahtanga, speaking.

I have said that the Indians of the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua, the Moscos and others, were probably of Carib stock. This opinion is founded, not only upon the express statements of Herrara, who says that "the Carib language was much spoken in Nicaragua," but also upon their general appearance, habits, and modes of life. Their language does not appear to have any direct relationship with that of the Southern Caribs; but is probably the same, or a dialect of the same with that spoken around what is now called Chiriqui Lagoon, near the Isthmus of Panama, and which was originally called Chiribiri, or Chraibici, from which comes Gomera's Caribici or Carib.[1]

The subjoined table comprises a list of about two hundred words in the Nagrangan and Dirian, or Chorotegan dialects or languages. I have also added a list of Moscan, or Mosquitian words, derived from the copious vocabulary laboriously collected by my friend Mr. A. J. Cotheal, in the

[1] Thirteen leagues from the Gulf of Nicoya, (towards the east, doubtless,) Oviedo speaks of a village called Carabizi, where the same language was spoken as at Chiriqui. The country on the Pacific, in the same latitude with Chiriqui, was called Cabiores ; and next to it was a province called Durucaca ; of both of which the inhabitants were barbarous and degraded—whence the Spaniards, in token of their contempt for the Jews, called this section of country, Judea.

Second Volume of the Transactions of the American Ethnological Society.

	English.	Nagrandan.	Chorotegan, or Dirian.	Moscan.
1	God	. . . . .	gopahemedeo	. . . . .
2	Devil	koonete	nimbumbi	wulasha
3	Man	rahpa	nuho	waikna
4	Woman	rapaku	nahseyomo	mairen
5	Boy	saika	nasome	tukta
6	Girl	saiku	naheyum	kiki
7	Child	chichi	naneyame	lupia
8	Father	ana	gooha	aize
9	Mother	autu	goomo	yapte
10	Husband	a'mbin	'mbohue	maia
11	Wife	a'guyu	nume	maia-mairen
12	Son	sacule	nasomeyamo	lupia-waikna
13	Daughter	saicula	nasayme	lupia-mairen
14	Brother	geneu	mambo	moniká
15	Sister	. . . . .	borunyama	laikra
16	Head	a'cu or edi	goochemo	lel
17	Hair	tu'su	nembe	tanwa
18	Face	enu	grote	mawan
19	Forehead	guitu	goola	prurera
20	Ear	nau	nuhme	kaima
21	Eye	setu	nahte	nakro
22	Nose	ta'co	mungoo	kamka
23	Mouth	dahnu	nunsu	bila
24	Tongue	duhu	greuhe	twaisa
25	Tooth	se'mu	nehe	napa
26	Beard	dambalu	gesagua	unmia
27	Neck	abulu	. . . . .	nana
28	Arm	pa'pu	deno	klakla
29	Hand	prechi	. . . . .	mita
30	Fingers	danau	. . . . .	sinaia
31	Nails	senanu	monsa	armala
32	Body	go'po	booproma	upla
33	Belly	schambo	goose	biarra
34	Leg	suntu	geeko	woyata
35	Foot	naku	graho	mena
36	Toes	danac'ua	. . . . .	mena-senaia

	English.	Nagrandan.	Chorotegan, or Dirian.	Moscan.
37	Bone	. . . . .	necone	dusa
38	Heart	buneo	nambooma	kupi
39	Blood	aite	nenuh	tala
40	Chief	namede	. . . . .	wati
41	Friend	. . . . .	. . . . .	uple
42	House or hut	gua	nahngu	watla
43	Kettle	daren	. . . . .	dikwa
44	Arrow	. . . . .	nitore	trisba
45	Bow	. . . . .	. . . . .	pinata
46	Axe	tlahua	nemoaguya	asa?
47	Knife	guichulu	. . . . .	skiro
48	Canoe	daguao	. . . . .	dore
49	Bread	upa	. . . . .	tane
50	Tobacco	rande	nemurema	twaka?
51	Sky	dehmalu	nekupe	kasbrica
52	Moon	. . . . .	. . . . .	kati
53	Sun	ahca	numbu	lapta
54	Star	ucu	nuete	slilma
55	Day	be or belu	. . . . .	iwa
56	Night	medoun	copripiomu	. . . . .
57	Season	ucumes	. . . . .	nani
58	Year	sigu?	. . . . .	. . . . .
59	Wind	nena	neshtu	pasa
60	Lightning	nagayatu	. . . . .	yunmila
61	Thunder	nadua	. . . . .	alwane
62	Rain	unde	coprinumbi	li
63	Fire	ahku	nahu	panta
64	Water	eeia	nimbu	lia
65	Earth	gooba	nekoopu	tasba
66	Sea	dancia	nimbuyumbu	kabo
67	River	eeia	. . . . .	awala
68	Creek	ea-chi	. . . . .	tingmi
69	Island	timbah	. . . . .	daukwara
70	Stone	esce or esenu	nugo	walpa
	Maize	eshe	nahma	aya
	Wood	barra	nanguima	dus
	Leaf	enā	nema	waia
	Bark	. . . . .	nanzogua	taia
75	Grass	rana	. . . . .	twi
	Flesh	nai	nampoome	wina

	English.	Nagrandan.	Chorotegan, or Dirian.	Moscan.
	Deer	. . . . .	numbongame	sula
	Squirrel	biseaha	. . . . .	buteong
	Dog	romoa	nambi	yul
80	Rabbit	. . . . .	. . . . .	kaiaki
	Snake	ɛpu	nule	piuta
	Egg	ragha	nuguloge	marbra
	Turkey	chimpepe	. . . . .	kusu
	Fish	egni	pocuguet	inska
90	White	mesha	andirume	pine
	Black	medagina	nansome	siksa
	Red	manga	arimbome	paune
	Green	masha	. . . . .	sane
	Small	chichi	nasunge	silpe
100	Great	oompa	nema	tara
	Old	ahmba	nuhyumbe	almuk
	Young	datie	nosominyumu	wama
	Good	mehena	. . . . .	yamne
	Bad	aimehena	. . . . .	saura
105	Dead	ganganu	gagame	pruan
	I	icu	saho	yung
	Thou	ica	sumusheta	ruan
	He	ica	. . . . .	wetin
	We	hechelu	semehmu	yung-nani
110	Ye	hechela	"	man-nani
	They	icanu	. . . . .	wetin-nani
	This	cala	. . . . .	naha
	That	cagui	. . . . .	baha
	All	duwawa	semehmu	puk
115	Many	. . . . .	pocope	nia
	Much	. . . . .	. . . . .	nia
	Who	. . . . .	. . . . .	dia
	Near	inge	. . . . .	lama
	To-day	endola	yazra	na-iua
120	Yesterday	deshe	. . . . .	iua-wala
	To-morrow	gase	pɔseanyaro	yunka
	Yes	mena	. . . . .	au?
	No	unta	aco	ahia
	Buttock	gashtug	. . . . .	
125	Bird	pusku	. . . . .	
	A Fly	ñug	. . . . .	

	English.	Nagrandan.	Chorotegan, or Dirian.	Moscan.
	Above	purumicita		
	Silver	prahca		
	Plantain	numbaba		
130	Word	enita		
	Basket	dashtu		
	Hot	tehsmica		
	Warm	mica		
	Breeches	frela		
135	Hat	gadusi		
	Ox	auha		
	Fever	ganguiga		
	Road	gamba		
	To Eat	asu?	. . . . .	paiai
140	To Drink	mahuia	boprima	daaia
	To Run	dagalnu	botupu	plap-aia
	To Leap	masiga	boora	soutw-aia
	To Come	aiho	aroya?	bal-aia
	To Go	aiyu or icu	paya	waia
145	To Sing	nagamo	pacoondamu	aiwnuaia
	To Sleep	ami	payacope	yap-aia
	To Speak	dahta	mage?	ais-aia
	To See	daiya	oome	kaik-aia
	To Kill	maharega	koypame	ik-aia?
150	To Love	nanjawala	. . . . .	. . . . .
	To Ask	danda	. . . . .	. . . . .
	To Take	aaya	. . . . .	. . . . .
	To keep silent	pruisha	. . . . .	. . . . .
	To Know	daninu	. . . . .	. . . . .
155	To Die	neageña	. . . . .	. . . . .
	Temple	. . . . .	nangumba	. . . . .
	Mountain	. . . . .	diria	. . . . .
	Cave	. . . . .	nu'pe	. . . . .
	Smoke	. . . . .	nemare	. . . . .
165	Flower	. . . . .	nele	. . . . .
	Reed	. . . . .	nure	. . . . .
	Eagle	. . . . .	moonkoyo	. . . . .
	Lake	. . . . .	neenda	. . . . .
	Afternoon	. . . . .	tasipio	. . . . .

The word for *man* in the Moscan language, is *Waikna;* and *Waikna* is the name which the Moscan Indians, before their debasement by intermixture with the negroes, arrogated to themselves. It was a very common practice amongst the aborigines of America, to distinguish their tribe by a word, meaning "the Men," *par excellence.* This is the significance of the name *Apache*, borne by the roving Indians of northern Mexico. With the Athapascas, *dennee*, the Algonquins and others, *inne*, with the Muyscans, *muysca*, and with the Araucanians, *reche*, all signified *the men*, or pure men, and entered into the designations of the various tribes.

Subjoined is the vocabulary, procured by Mr. Frœbel, in Chontales, and referred to on page 314. As there observed, it does not seem to have any affinity with the other Nicaraguan languages, except a faint relationship, in the inflexions of the verb, with the Nagrandan.

CHONDAL?

Sun	māa	Nose	nágnitak
Day	māada	Mouth	dinibas
Star	māabka	Blood	anasscá
Moon	uáigo	House	ù
Fire	cuh	Town	uálna
Water,	wass	Plantain	uagi
Earth	sāno	Sugar	disnok
Night	baraca	Cow	sana
Air, Wind	uing	Milk	sanadagoscá
Mountain	asang	Horse	pomca
Man	all	Tiger	nágua
Woman	yall	Dog	sulo
Father	papāni?	Cat	nisto
Mother	mamani?	Fish	tabomm
Son	paunima	1	alosláj
Daughter	paucoma	2	muyebu
Little boy	tiguis	3	muyebas
Little girl	batanil	4	muyarunca
Brother	uajaini	5	muyesinca?

Sister	amini	6	dijca, or muydijca
Head	tunni	7	bajca, or muybajca
Arm	uacálni	8	muyacca
Foot	cálni	9	yaccabavo
Eye	miniktaka	10	muyhasluy

To sleep	amacuting
To eat	tecuting
I am	acaralaúyang
Thou art	ayalalaúga
He is	alaslaúga
We are	yaralalauca
Ye are	laucayalálanca
They are	eauyoadá

So far as can be ascertained, the Indians of Nicaragua practiced a system of numeration corresponding with that common to nearly all the civilized, and some of the barbarous, nations of the continent. That is to say, they used what Mr. Gallatin has denominated the *vigintesimal system*, instead of the decimal—i. e. counted by twenties instead of tens. Among the Esquimaux, the Algonquins, the Choctaws, and some other nations and families, it seems that the primitive method of counting was by fives. This is what may be called *finger-counting;* and that their system of numbers originated in counting first the fingers of one hand, then of both, and finally both fingers and toes, is established by the names of the numerals themselves. The word expressing the number 5, in the Carib of Essequibo, the Moscan, and some other languages, means *one hand;* that expressing 10, *two hands*, or both hands; that expressing 20, *a man*, i. e. both hands and feet. In the Esquimaux, 8, 9, and 10 respectively mean the middle, the fourth, and the little finger.[1] The Peruvians and

[1] Crantz says of the Esquimaux, "Their proper numeral table is *five*; then counting on their fingers thy call *six* by the name of the first finger, and for the following, repeat two, three, four, five; and count from ten to twenty with their toes. Sometimes, instead of twenty they say '*a man*;' for one hundred '*five men*.'"

Araucanians had a purely decimal system. Humboldt has shown that the vigintesimal system existed in the Basque—that enigmatical language, which seems to hold more and closer affinities to some of those of America, than any known to have existed in Europe.

I was able to procure the numerals complete of only the Nagrandan dialect or language. They are given below. It will be observed that there is a simple, uncompounded word for *ten*, and another for *twenty*.

1	Imba	1
2	Apu	2
3	Asu	3
4	Acu	4
5	Huisu	5
6	Mahu	6
7	Niquinu	7
8	Nuha	8
9	Melnu	9
10	Guha	10
11	Guanimba	10+1
12	Guanapu	10+2
13	Guanasu	10+3
14	Guanacu	10+4
15	Guanisu	10+5
16	Guanmahu	10+6
17	Guanquinu	10+7
18	Guanuha	10+8
19	Guanmelnu	10+9
20	Dino, imbadiño, or 'badiño	1×20
21	'Badiñoimbanu	1×20+1
22	'Badiñoapunu	1×20+2
23	'Badiñoasunu	1×20+3
30	'Badiñoguhanu	1×20+10
31	'Badiñoguanimbanu	1×20+10+1
32	'Badiñoguanapunu	1×20+10+2
33	'Badiñoguanasunu	1×20+10+3

40	Apudiño	2×20
41	Apudiñoimbanu	2×20+1
42	Apudiñoapunu	2×20+2
43	Apudiñoasunu	2×20+3
50	Apudiñoguhanu	2×20+10+1
51	Apudiñoguanimbanu	2×20+10+2
52	Apudiñoguanapunu	2×20+10+3
60	Asudiño	3×20
70	Asudiñoguhanu	3×20+10
80	Acudiño	4×20
90	Acudiñoguhanu	4×20+10
100	Huisudiño or guhamba	5×20 or great ten
200	Guahadiño	10×20
400	Diñoamba	Great twenty
1000	Guhaisudiño	10×5×20
2000	Hisudiñoamba	Five great twenties
4000	Guhadiñoamba	Ten great twenties

The terminal *amba* or *mba* in the Nagrandan language signified great or increase; one hundred, therefore, is sometimes called *guhamba* or great ten; *diñoamba* or great twenty is four hundred; and ten great twenties is four thousand. In common, I believe, with the Maya only, the Nagrandan words for 40, 60, 80, 100, etc., mean respectively twice twenty, three, four and five times twenty. In common also with the Maya, the numerals from 20 to 39 are compounded of 20 and the numerals from one to nineteen, with the addition of the terminal *nu*, which is the sign of the plural. But in the Maya this terminates with 40, while in the Nagrandan it is continued throughout, from 40 to 60, 60 to 80, etc.

Col. Galindo has given us the names of six tribes of Indians in Costa Rica, of none of which have we any vocabularies. Neither have we any of the languages spoken in San Salvador, and in Honduras. There is reason to believe, however, that the Chondal extended into the latter state, as also the

language spoken on the coast. It is also probable that, the language which I have called the Nagrandan, prevailed amongst the aborigines occupying the salubrious, central plateau of Honduras. This I infer from the names of Chinandega, Posultega, Chichigalpa, Comogalpa, on the plain of Leon, and Matagalpa, Tegucigalpa, etc., which are clearly from one source, on the plateau of Honduras.

In Guatemala there existed a variety of languages or dialects, stated at eighteen and at twenty-four, of which the Poconchi, the Quiche, Quichekiel or Kachiquiel, Sinca, Chorti, Mam, and Subtugil were the principal. The vocabularies of none of these, so far as we are enabled to institute comparisons, sustain any relation to those of Nicaragua.

That the Niquirans were Mexicans, requires no further or better proof than is afforded by the fragments of their language already presented. The fact, as we have seen, was distinctly asserted by the early voyagers; but as they did not present any evidence in support of their statement, it never received full credit among students. Indeed, as late as 1850, Dr. Latham, in his erudite work on "The Varieties of Man," regards the evidence on this point as "by no means conclusive." In completing the evidence, and establishing incontestibly that such a colony did exist in Nicaragua, at the period of the discovery in the fifteenth century, I have the satisfaction of fixing one more and a very important point of departure in American Ethnological inquiries; important, as showing that this continent has not been exempt from those migrations, corresponding to the currents and tides of the ocean, which have, earlier or later, swept over every part of the Old World, and affected so remarkably, by intermixture and change of soil and climate, the condition and relations of its inhabitants.

We have then presented to us the extraordinary phenomenon of a fragment of a great aboriginal nation, widely separated from the parent stock, and intruded among other

and hostile nations; yet, from the comparative lateness of the separation, or some other cause, still retaining its original, distinguishing features, so as to be easily recognized. The causes which led to their migration from Mexico, can probably never be accurately known. They have a tradition that they came from the north-west; and that they left their original seats in consequence of having been overpowered by a hostile nation, superior to themselves in numbers, who, not satisfied with conquering them in battle, made slaves of them, sacrificed their women and children, and outraged them in various ways. They called the country from whence they came Ticomega Emaguatega, which name corresponds with none with which we are acquainted. This tradition receives a strong support from Torquemada, who states it as a historical fact, current in Mexico itself, that, at a very early period, two considerable Mexican nations dwelling in Soconusco, on the coast of Oaxaca, near Tehuantepec, were attacked by the Ulmeques, who had been their enemies before their settlement in that region—leaving the inference that there had been an anterior migration of the same nations, probably from the valley of Anahuac. The Ulmeques subdued them, imposed on them the most grievous burthens, and sacrificed numbers of them to their gods. Reduced to despair, they consulted their priests, who directed them to depart from the country—which they did, going southward. These, he adds, after various adventures, arrived in Nicaragua, where they were well received by the people, who made room for them on the shores of the lake. They afterwards extended their limits by war and alliances.[1]

Fragments, Torquemada adds, dropped off from the main

[1] In another part of his History, Torquemada gives an account of a pretended conquest of Nicaragua by Montezuma, in which, however, is mixed up the same circumstances elsewhere related as connected with the migration; showing, as observed by M. Terneaux Compans, that it is only the old tradition, applied to modern times.

body in Guatemala, where they built Mictlan (City of the Dead) and Yzcuitlan (City of the Rabbit), and where there still exist numerous places bearing names of Mexican origin. Amongst the migrating tribes he mentions the Cholultecas, as separating from the rest, and settling on the Gulf of Nicoya. He probably means to say the Gulf of Fonseca, where, as we have seen, the name is still perpetuated. This opinion is supported by his subsequent declaration, that one portion of the people, amongst whom the Mexicans intruded themselves, fled to Nicoya, thus accounting for the division of the Chorotegans already referred to. Torquemada also states that the Mexicans founded a city on Lake Managua, which they called Xolotlan, or in Chorotegan language Nagrando. But if so, it seems most likely that they afterwards abandoned the position. Had they held it at the time of the Conquest, the fact would not have escaped Oviedo.

It has been supposed that the Pipil Indians, occupying the coast of San Salvador, were also of Mexican origin, and arrived in Central America at the same time with the colony in Nicaragua. We have no vocabulary of their language, but the names of most of the places in the region which they occupied, or occupy, are clearly Mexican. Istepec, Usulatan, Sesuntepec, Cuscutlan, Suchiltepec, Cojutepec, Cuyutitan, Jilpango, etc., are unmistakably Mexican. It has, however, been suspected that the friendly Indians from Mexico, who accompanied Alvarado in his conquest of the country, were established here, and that the names to which I have referred were given by them. This is a point which is yet open to investigation; meantime, I incline to the belief that a Mexican colony also existed in San Salvador.

The Mexican historian, Ixtlixochitl, records that at the period of the destruction of the Toltecan Empire, in the year Cetecpatl, or 959 of our era, a part of those who survived went to the southward, to Nicaragua. But the traditions of the people themselves indicate that the recital of Torquemada is

nearest the truth. It seems, therefore, that this colony, like that of the Mormons in the Valley of the Salt Lake, and that of the Jews in Palestine, was founded by a general migration, undertaken in consequence of persecutions, through the midst of intervening nations—an armed migration, giving war to the weak and the hostile, and negotiating with the friendly. It is curious and important to know of an authentic instance where migrations of this kind have take taken place on this continent, in estimating the possible, as well as the probable, relationship which may exist between its various families.

That similar separations and migrations have occurred in the night of American history seems undoubted; but at periods so remote, that the offshoots have lost their original features, or have retained them in a modified and obscured form, painful to the investigator, because suggestive of relations which it is impossible clearly to establish. We have a remarkable example in the Natchez, a small tribe on the Mississippi river, whose institutions civil and religious, manners, habits, and customs, approximated closely to the Peruvians; more closely, in fact, than to any other nation of the continent. Enigmatical fragments like these, scattered over both the Northern and Southern Hemispheres, betoken a high antiquity for the American race.

The causes which led to these separations, and the motives which impelled the American nations to divisions and migrations, must probably remain forever unknown, except so far as they may be inferred from the recorded history of the old world. For, after all, man, of whatever race or however situated, is subject to the same laws, and guided by the same influences. The state of separation, *disruption*, as it is sometimes called, in which the American race was found, has been variously attributed to a radical, physiological defect in its character, to extraordinary natural phenomena, convulsions of nature, such as are said to have swallowed up the island of Atlantis,—calamities filling men with a terror so

monstrous, that, handed down from race to race, it darkened their intellects, and hardened their hearts, and drove them, flying from each other, far from the blessings of social life. To me, however, this separation and sub-division of the aboriginal race, and the exclusion of its different families, in respect to each other, seem rather due to long periods of time, and long continued migrations of single nations and tribes, from one portion of the continent to the other.

The discoverers, when they landed on the shores of our own country, found one great current of migration setting from the North-west, upon the region now occupied by the New England and Middle States. Another flowing from the direction of Texas and New Mexico into the Southern States east of the Mississippi; and the slow but constant southward tendency of the Oregon tribes, has been a frequent subject of remark among observers. I do not now refer to those traces of vast populations, antedating all traditions, which abound in the Mississippi Valley, mute but most truthful and impressive witnesses of ancient migrations—not of single tribes and petty nations, but of vast families of men.

The causes of these migrations, as I have said, must probably remain conjectural. It is the popular belief, that most have been from the north towards the south: and the plausible explanation, that more genial climates and fertile soils were the impelling causes to them, has been generally accepted. Yet, like many other popular beliefs, it is eminently unfounded. The great tides of men have flowed very nearly upon the same parallels of latitude. The descent of the Germans on Rome was no migration, as compared with these; it was the eddy, the outward flow of the great current, which afterwards swept over the ocean barrier, traversed a new world, and is now gathering its strength on the golden shores of the Pacific.

RELICS OF ART.

Our knowledge of the antiquities of Central America, extends only to those found in the northern portion of that interesting, but as yet little known country; and is confined to the monuments at Copan, in Honduras, and Quirigua and Quiché or Quesaltenango, in Guatemala. The researches of Messrs. Stephens and Catherwood, in conjunction with a few incidental notices from Galindo and others, have made these familiar to the world, and excited the deepest interest as to the results of future investigations. The extent of population and the degree of civilization which they indicate, have naturally led to the conclusion that many others exist in the same regions, the discovery of which will reward the adventurous explorer, and throw new light upon the primitive civilization of the New World.

But in prosecuting researches here, there are many difficulties to be encountered, which can be but imperfectly estimated by those not on the spot. The population of Central America is small, and almost entirely confined to certain narrow localities upon the Pacific slope; and the political circumstances of the people, as well as the state of education among them, have been such as to afford little encouragement to archæological studies. As a consequence, they know far less than the people of the United States, of the aboriginal monuments of their own vicinity. Little information of importance to the investigator can be gathered from them. Besides, by far the greater proportion of the country is in its primitive state, and covered with dense, tangled, and almost impenetrable tropical forests, rendering fruitless all attempts at systematic investigation. There are vast tracts, untrodden by human feet, or traversed only by Indians, who have a superstitious reverence for the moss-covered and crumbling monuments that are hidden in the depths of the wilderness, and which their vague traditions tell them are remnants of

the greatness of their fathers, the shrines and statues of their ancient gods, which it is a religious duty to hide from the profane intrusion of an alien race. These Indians are often unfriendly; and it is only at the risk of life that advances can be made into their fastnesses. From them but little can be gathered; and if any discoveries are made, it must be by accident. The hunter or the herdsman may encounter ancient remains in the wilderness; and if they are remarkable, or he is curious, he may mark the spot and be able to point it out to the traveller. But the information he may be able to give is always of an uncertain character, and leaves the inquirer, if not in actual doubt as to the existence of anything worthy of his attention, at least under the apprehension that, even after a long and fatiguing journey, and after enduring every kind of hardship, he may be unable to discover the object of his search. For these and other reasons, it will be long before the treasures of the past, which exist in Central America, can become fully known. Their investigation must be the gradual work of time, in which individuals can but partially assist.

Most of the monuments which fell under my observation have been described in the preceding narrative. I have no doubt, however, that many will be discovered, as the country becomes better known. Indeed, I heard of a number of localities where remains are to be found, but which my occupations would not allow me to visit. Amongst the most remarkable of these are the traces of immense works in the district of Chontales, near the Indian town of Juygalpa, on the northern shore of Lake Nicaragua, nearly opposite the city of Granada. They were observed by Dr. Livingston in his visit to the gold mines of that region; and are described by him as consisting of trenches three or four yards broad at the bottom, and extending indefinitely, in a right line, across the savannas, and into the depths of the forest. He followed one for upwards of a mile. At intervals the trenches widen,

forming elliptical, sunken areas, sixty or eighty feet in diameter. In one of these areas, and on a line transversely to that of the trench, were two small mounds of stone, in the next area four mounds, and so on, alternately. These mounds were five or six feet in height, and placed with the utmost regularity. The purposes of these singular remains, as well as their extent, until further and complete investigation, must remain matters of conjecture. It may nevertheless be observed, that there are traditions of a ruined city, with a variety of singular monuments, near Juygalpa, of which it may be worth the trouble of the adventurous explorer to determine the truth. It is very certain that the late Chevalier Frederickthal obtained some monuments from the northern shore of the lake,—but their fate is unknown.

In my visit to the volcano of Las Pilas, in what was anciently the populous province of Marabios, about twenty miles north-east of Leon, and near the base of the volcano of Orota, I was shown a number of low mounds of earth and stone, rectangular, and set round the edges with stones, which seemed to have been the sites, or foundations of ancient buildings. They were covered and surrounded by fragments of broken pottery. It is possible that they indicated burial places; but I had no means of excavating them, to determine the fact.

In Honduras, as also in San Salvador, I heard of remains and monuments, equal to those of Copan in extent and interest, which I had no opportunity of visiting, but which I hope to be able to investigate in person, at no very remote period.

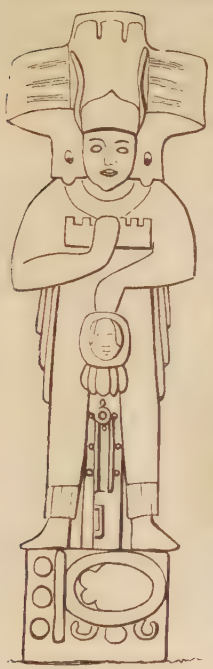
In respect to the monuments which I have described, and their probable origin, little need be said. They may differ somewhat amongst themselves in antiquity, for it is not to be supposed that they were all made at the same period. But there is no good reason for supposing, that they were not made by the nations found in possession of the country. It

will, in fact, be seen in another connection, that they had idols of stone in their temples, which were carved of different forms, to represent the various divinities worshipped by their makers. These temples were structures of wood, surrounded by altars, or high-places of earth and stone; upon which, as in Mexico, sacrifices were performed. Many of these temples were burned by the conquerors, the high-places destroyed, and the idols broken in pieces. And I have had frequent occasion to remark, that by far the greater proportion of the monuments yet remaining, bear indubitable marks of the conquerors' religious zeal, in their battered faces and broken limbs.

It may seem somewhat incongruous that while Nicaragua was inhabited by people of different families—the autochthones and the intruders from Mexico—that their monuments should have sustained so close a resemblance. But while the fact, they that differed wholly in language, and greatly in manners and customs, is affirmed by the early chroniclers; the additional fact that they were alike, or closely assimilated, in religion, is also as distinctly affirmed.

The monuments found in the island of Zapatero, which there is every reason to believe was occupied by the Niquirans, differ only in size, and their more elaborate workmanship, from those found at Monotombita, Subtiaba, and other places. Monoliths appear to have been common to all the semi-civilized nations of North America. They were found even at Palenque, where Mr. Stephens discovered one, of which a drawing is here introduced, for the purpose of illustrating a remark which has already been made, respecting the occurrence of the *cross*, in some of the aboriginal monuments. A number at Zapatero are distinguished by this feature; which, it is possible, was intended to represent some kind of head-dress. Archæologists are aware that the early monkish writers, laid great stress upon the fact that crosses were discovered in various parts of America, at the time of the Con-

quest. They deduced therefrom some very extraordinary conclusions. Don Carlos de Siguenza y Gongora speaks of one



drawn from the cave of Mizteca Baxa, and venerated, in his day, in the conventual church of Tonala, dedicated to St. Dominic. This cross he avers was "discovered by the music of angels being heard in the said cave, on every vigil of the glorious apostle St. Thomas," who, according to his hypothesis, introduced Christianity into America, immediately after the era of Christ. Gomara mentions cases in Yucatan; and Boturini testifies to having frequently met with them in the paintings. His error, however, consists in mistaking the symbolical "*Tonacaquahuitl*," or Tree of Life, for a cross. This is not the place to attempt an explanation of the ideas connected with this symbol. It was represented with branches something in the form of a cross, surmounted by a bird. This form was retained in some of the monuments, as well as in the paintings, as may be seen on the principal tablet discovered by Mr. Stephens, at Palenque, on the back wall of altar, Casa No. 2. (p. 345).

Several examples of vases, terra cottas, and other fictile products have been presented in the foregoing pages. In respect of execution, the ancient pottery of Nicaragua quite equals the best specimens found in Mexico or Peru. It is always well-burned, and often elaborately painted in brilliant and durable colors. The forms are generally very regular, but there is no evidence of the use of the potter's wheel: on the contrary, there is reason to believe that the ancient processes have undergone little or no modification since the

Conquest. The pottery generally in use amongst all classes in Central America, is of Indian manufacture, and is fashioned entirely by hand.

TERRA COTTA FROM OMETEPEC. ONE-FOURTH SIZE.

Several terra cottas and small vessels of pottery are figured in the accompanying plate. Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 are from Costa Rica, where they were found in the ancient graves. Figure 1 is very symmetrical; each leg is hollow, and has in it a little ball, which rattles whenever the vase is moved. Figure 2 is not perfect; it originally supported some object upon its right shoulder. The head is represented covered with what resembles a close-fitting Highland cap. Figure 3 is a plain vessel, symmetrical in shape, but without ornament. Figure 4 is most artistical. The top is artfully fashioned in the shape of a tortoise. Figure 5 seems to have been designed only as a rattle. Figure 6 was obtained from the island of Ometepec, and represents an alligator upon the back of a human figure. It originally surmounted a large vase. The arms have been broken off, but their places are shown in the sketch.

ABORIGINAL RELICS.

Figs. 7 and 8 are drawings of stone hatchets or adzes. The first is composed of a variety of green quartz, and is alike symmetrical in shape, and elaborate in workmanship. It is highly polished upon the surface represented in the drawing; but the reverse has marks which show that it has been sawn from a block of the same material. Where the notches occur in the sides, is a hole drilled entirely through the stone, parallel to its face. The lower or cutting edge is slightly curved: implying that, if used for cutting purposes, it was as an adze. Altogether it exhibits far more skill in its workmanship than any similar relic which has fallen under my notice. It was found in an ancient grave, in Costa Rica, where others of similar material, but larger size and ruder form, are of frequent occurrence. Fig. 8 is of syenite, and in shape indistinguishable from the stone axes of the Indians, which are so abundant throughout Mexico and the United States, and which have their exact counterparts amongst the ancient relics discovered in the British Islands, and in the north of Europe. It was dug up near Granada in Nicaragua, during my stay in that city. Similar relics are numerous in that country, varying in size from three and four inches to a foot in length. Examples of relics of this kind might be greatly multiplied; but what have already been presented will be amply sufficient to give an accurate idea of their general characters, if not of their specific purposes.

LEG OF VASE FROM ZAPATERO. ONE-FOURTH SIZE.

CHAPTER II.

CIVIL, POLITICAL, AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION: MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND RELIGION.

The Indians of Nicaragua were divided into numerous distinct tribes and petty sovereignties, governed by independent chiefs or caziques. These, it is presumed, were hereditary; but whether the descent was by the female side, as in many other parts of America, or by the male, we are not informed. This condition of things must have resulted in collisions between the several caziques, and, by war, intrigue, and alliances, in the aggrandisement of one at the expense of the other. Such was the fact; and by these means, some of the chiefs became very powerful, and had as tributaries and vassals, chiefs who were themselves proprietors of villages and districts of land. These were the personal attendants and body-guards of the greater chiefs, "their captains and courtiers."

We are, however, told that some of the districts and their inhabitants, were not governed by caziques, but by councils of old men called *Guegues*,[1] in whom were vested the supreme administrative and executive powers. They were elective; and in them was vested the appointment of a military leader, or "war-chief," as he was called amongst the northern nations, who, by virtue of his office, was a member of the

[1] This I take to be a Mexican word, formed by the reduplication of *hue* or *gue* old, huehue, or guegue, literally old-old, i. e., very old. *Huehue-tlalapan*, the Very-old-tlalapan, and Gueguetenango, Very-old-tenango, are names of places both in Mexico and Guatemala.

council. He was, nevertheless, jealously watched, and if suspected of plotting against the safety of the commonwealth, or for the purpose of securing supreme power in his own hands, was rigorously put to death by the council of Guegues. These councils were early abolished by the Spaniards, "who found it easier to control one man than a number," each one of whom had equal influence amongst the people. The Guegues were also the chroniclers of their respective tribes, and made books, in which they recorded their boundaries, and the limits of property, "with all the rivers, lakes, and forests, to which reference was made in case of dispute amongst their own people, or with the other tribes."

The custom of *tatooing*, it seems, was practiced to a certain extent, at least so far as to designate, by peculiarities in the marks, the several tribes or caziques to which the people belonged. "For," says Oviedo, "both sexes pierce their ears and make drawings on their bodies with stone knives, which are made black and permanent, by a kind of coal called *tile*."

The local administrations differed very much, according to the temper of the cazique. There nevertheless were many well-established rules by which he was governed, that were seldom or never violated. The nature of some of these will be discovered as we proceed. The subordinate officers of the caziques were distinguished by certain insignia, which never failed to receive the respect with which similar evidences of authority are regarded in civilized countries.

It appears that the chiefs, although absolute in their powers, nevertheless took care to call around them the best informed and most respected portion of their subjects, as advisers. Thus, whenever a military expedition or other enterprise was meditated, the chief, who was called *teite*, convened a *Monexica* or council, which appointed persons to assess the cost, so that it should fall equally upon the community. The councillors of the cazique were named for four

months, at the end of which time they went back amongst the people. They were always chosen from the old men. One of the first duties of the council was the appointment of subordinate executive officers, to act during the four months for which they were chosen, two of which were always present at the markets, to preserve the peace, and punish those who used false measures, or practised frauds of any kind, as also those who disobeyed orders, or violated received usages. It was also their duty to pay particular attention to strangers, and encourage them to frequent the markets or fairs.

The council houses were called *grepons*, surrounded by broad corridors called *galpons*, beneath which the arms were kept, protected by a guard of young men. The decision of the *Monexica* or council might be against the cazique, and his judgment be overruled; but he could dissolve it, nor could it be again convened except by his orders. The war-chief was elected by the warriors to lead them, on account of his ability and bravery in battle, and had undivided command of the forces; but the civil, or hereditary chief, often accompanied the army, and in case the war-chief was slain, either took his place in person or named a successor on the spot. The spoil of battle was not divided equally amongst the warriors; but each one kept all he got. It was not usual to punish cowardice with death; but cowards were despoiled of their arms and driven out of the ranks in disgrace. Prisoners were much desired for sacrifices, and consequently the warriors sought rather to capture than slay their enemies. Those who acquitted themselves well in battle, or who had triumphed in a hand-to-hand conflict with an enemy, took the title of *Tapaliqui*, and as a mark of distinction were permitted to shave the entire head, leaving only a scalp-lock, or tuft, on the crown. This was required to be precisely half a finger in length, with a tuft in the centre, a little longer. The same practice also prevailed in Mexico.

Marriage amongst the Nicaraguan nations was a civil rite, performed by the cazique, and the ceremonies were much the same as those practiced amongst the Mexicans. The matches were arranged by the parents of the parties; and as soon as the bargain was concluded, two fowls and a *rula* (a kind of house-dog) were killed, some cacao prepared, and the friends and neighbors invited to the feast. This finished, the cazique led the couple into a small house, devoted to that purpose, in which a fire of resin was kindled, where, after giving them a lecture, he left them to themselves. When the fire was burned out, the rite was complete. If it proved that the woman was not a virgin, she was sent back to her parents, and permanently disgraced, while the man was at liberty to marry again. The couple, after marriage, received from their parents, a piece of land, and certain fruit trees, which, if they died childless, reverted to their respective families. But one wife was permitted to any man except the cazique, although concubinage was practised by those who could afford it. Bigamy was punished by exile, and by confiscation of property for the benefit of the first wife or husband, who was then at liberty to marry again. This privilege was not however extended to women having children. Adultery on the part of the wife, subjected her to severe flogging, and to be sent back to her family; but she still retained her effects. It liberated the husband from his marital obligations; the woman, however, could not marry again. Relationship, beyond the first degree, was no bar to marriage. Marriages within families, on the contrary, were encouraged as "tightening the bonds of relationship." Incest was unknown; but the man who debauched the daughter of his master or cazique, was buried alive, with the partner of his guilt. The man who committed rape was seized, confined, and unless he could make reparation, by large presents, to the injured woman or her parents, became her or their slave. Sodomites were stoned to death. Prostitutes were tolerated,

and the price of their favors limited at ten *amauds* of cacao. They were accompanied by bullies (*rufianos*), who, however, did not share their gains. Establishments, or houses of prostitution, were kept publicly. On the occasion of a certain annual festival, it was permitted that all the women, of whatever condition, might abandon themselves to the arms of whoever they pleased. Rigid fidelity, however, was exacted, at all other times.

Parents might traffic with the persons of their daughters, without subjecting themselves to punishment. Prostitution was sometimes resorted to by girls, whose parents were unable to provide for them a proper marriage portion. When one of these, having by this means, secured a competence, desired to withdraw from that mode of life, she procured a piece of ground whereon to build a house, and collecting her lovers, announced to them, that those desirous of having her for a wife, must unite and build a house, after the plan which she should furnish, and that when completed, she would select her husband from amongst them. The house being built and stocked, a feast was prepared, at the close of which the girl took the man of her choice by the arm and led him away, exulting to be preferred over his rivals. The rejected ones, says the chronicler, "generally take it patiently, but occasionally one suspends himself from a tree, in order that the devil may have his part in the wedding, and is eaten for his pains."

Oviedo states that the men built the houses, cultivated the ground, hunted, and fished, while the women did the trading. If true, this was an exception to the common practice of the Indian nations, which devolved all the drudgery upon the females. "The husband," he says, before leaving the house, "must sweep it, and kindle a fire"—duties which now, most certainly, fall upon the females.

In respect to their physique, they were well made, and of fairer complexion than the average; and then, as now, fre-

quently shaved the head, leaving only a circle of hair extending along the edge of the forehead, from ear to ear. They all had a custom of cleaving the under part of the tongue, and of piercing their ears for the introduction of ornaments.

Like the Peruvians, the Natchez, and many other aboriginal nations, they flattened their heads. "When our children are young," said the chiefs to the Friar Bobadilla, "their heads are tender, and are then moulded into the shape which you see in us, by means of two pieces of wood, hollowed in the middle. Our gods instructed our ancestors that, by so doing, we should have a noble air, and the head be better fitted to bear burthens."

Murder under aggravated circumstances, was punished with death; but in all cases of homicide the perpetrator gave to the next relatives of the victim a male or female slave, clothes and other articles. Robbers had their hair cut off, and were the slaves of the injured party until complete restitution was effected.

A father might sell his own children or himself as slaves, in cases of great necessity, with the privilege of redemption. Payment of debts was rigidly required; if a man had borrowed maize or fruits, the creditor might repay himself from his debtor's fields.

Any man might expatriate himself, but he could not diminish the public wealth by taking any of his property with him; he might, however, give it to his relatives.

Their dwellings seem to have been rude structures of canes, thatched with grass, identical with those now used by the poorer inhabitants. The residences of the chiefs were of the same construction, but larger and more commodious. In all of the towns were one or more public squares, or market-places, around which the temples and public edifices seem to have been built. All of these buildings, the chronicler adds, were surrounded by fruit trees, planted so thickly and in such a manner that the square could hardly be entered.

The caziques affected great state, and carried their exclusion so far as to receive messages from other chiefs only through officers delegated for that purpose. Oviedo illustrates their etiquette by an incident which befel himself, when he visited the chief of Tecoatega, which he did soon after his arrival in the country, in company with the chaplain of the governor. The chief, he says, neither spoke to him, nor deigned to look at him, until informed that he was not only attached to the household of the emperor, but was a relative of the governor. The chief then laid aside his gravity, and asked and answered questions with much spirit, "showing clearly that he was a man of talent." He nevertheless sent one of his attendants to question the servants of the party, to ascertain if what they had told him was true.

Cacao, or rather the seeds of the cacao, here, as in many other parts of tropical America, answered the chief purpose of currency, when the transaction between buyer and seller was not simple barter. There were fixed market days; but, by a singular rule, the privilege of trading was confined to the women, and to boys not yet arrived at puberty. No man was allowed to enter, or even to look into the *tianguez*, or market. The people of friendly villages might traffic with each other, and were freely admitted into each other's markets. All articles of production, metals, woods, fruits, and vegetables, as well as all varieties of manufactures, were exposed for sale in the *tianguez*.

They were very industrious in their habits, and skillful workers in gold and copper, and in cotton and other fabrics of the pita, or agave. They cultivated cotton extensively, and worked it curiously, probably in the very manner still practised, and which is described in a preceding chapter. Of this their clothing was made. "The men wore a sort of doublet without sleeves, and a belt, which, after passing around the body, was carried between the legs, and fastened behind. The women had a *nagua*, hanging from the girdle

as low as the knees. Those of the better orders had them falling as low as the ankle, and also wore a handkerchief covering their breasts. Both sexes wore sandals made of deer skins, and called *cutares*, which were fastened by a cotton cord, passing between the toes and around the heel.

Their personal ornaments were chiefly of gold and pearls. The people of Nicoya, which Oviedo expressly tells us were Chorotegans, pierced their lower lips, and introduced "round pieces of white bone," and sometimes "a button of gold." The women of this section the chronicler specially commends, on account of their symmetry of figure and beauty of feature.

Their arms were identical with those used by the Mexicans, and consisted of lances and arrows pointed with flint, copper, or the bones of fishes, and a species of sword called in Mexico *mahquahuitl*, which was a tough piece of wood, with blades of obsidian set on either edge, and wielded with both hands, constituting a formidable weapon. For defence they used shields of wood, covered with hide, and ornamented with feathers, which by their color and figures which they formed, signified the rank and position of the bearer.

They had also quilted jackets and short breeches covering the thighs, made of cotton, which an arrow penetrated with difficulty, and which the Spaniards found to be so effective for defence that they adopted them for themselves. The accompanying cut of a soldier's dress is copied from a Mexican manuscript. The letter *a* indicates the feather head-dress; *c*, a plate of metal covering part of the face, and *d*, the cotton-quilted armor. They did not poison their weapons. Gold seems to have been used only for ornamental purposes, and for making little idols, to be worshipped in their houses and temples. They had

amongst them certain manuscripts, which the Spaniards called books, and which seem to have been identical with those possessed by the Mexicans. They were painted "in black and red colors, on parchment made from the skins of deer, and were a hand's breadth or upwards in width, and ten or twelve yards long, and folded like a screen. "Though these characters," continues Oviedo, "were neither letters nor figures, they were not without their meaning."

RELIGION, ETC.

We are assured by Oviedo that while they differed widely in their habits and modes of life, the inhabitants of Nicaragua nevertheless agreed substantially in their religion. This appears to have been the same, or very nearly the same with that of Mexico; and amongst the Niquirans the names of the gods, as well as the rites with which they were worshipped, including the practice of human sacrifices, were identical with those of the Aztecs and their neighbors in the valley of Anahuac. The nature of their beliefs, as also the prescriptions of their ritual, appear very clearly from the records preserved by Oviedo. Among these is a transcript of the proceedings of a commission, of which the Fray Francisco de Bobadilla, Provincial of the Order of Merey, was the head, delegated by Pedro Arias de Avila, Governor of Nicaragua, in 1528, to procure an exact account of the condition of the Indians, to ascertain the nature of their religion, and to discover how far they had been affected by the introduction of Christianity. It was on the 28th of September of the same year that Bobadilla arrived in the province of Niquira, and commenced his investigation. The first who appeared before him was a chief named Chichoyatona, whom Bobadilla piously proceeded to baptize, naming him Alonzo de Herrera. He then inquired of him if he knew there was

a God who had created man, the world, and all things. But Chichoyatona either did not know, or else did not care to answer questions, and the friar got nothing from him. He next tried an old man named Cipat, but he replied to the same question that he neither knew nor cared, and was accordingly dismissed. It is not, however, to be supposed that Cipat was really so ignorant; for the Indians of Nicaragua, in common with those of every part of the continent, were extremely jealous of all things relating to their religion. Bobadilla, no wise discouraged, tried another chief, named Mizeztoy, and this time with better success. Mizeztoy stated that he was a Christian; that is to say, had had water poured on his head by a priest, but had really quite forgot what name had been given to him. The result of his examination is given by the chronicler as follows:

Friar. Do you know who made heaven and earth? *Indian.* My parents told me, when I was a child, that it was *Fumagostad* and *Zipaltonal*, the first male and the second female.—*F.* What are they, men or animals? *I.* I do not know; my parents never saw them; nor do I know whether they dwell in the air or elsewhere.—*F.* Who created man, and all things? *I.* As I have already said, *Famagostad* and *Zipaltonal*, a younger named *Ecalchot*, a *Guegue* (or *very old* personage), and the little *Ciagat*.—*F.* Where are they? *I.* I do not know, except that they are our great gods, whom we call *Teotes*.—*F.* Have they parents or ancestors? *I.* No; for they are gods.—*F.* Do the *Teotes* eat? *I.* I do not know; but when we make war, we do so that they may eat the blood of our enemies whom we have slain or taken prisoners. We scatter the blood on all sides, in order that the *Teotes* may make sure of it; for we know not on which side they dwell, nor even that they do really consume it.—*F.* Do you know, or have you even heard, that the world has been destroyed since the creation? *I.* I have heard our fathers say that it was destroyed by water, a very long time ago.—*F.* Were all men drowned? *I.* I do not know; but the *Teotes* rebuilt the world, and placed upon it men and animals again.—*F.* How did the *Teotes* escape? upon a mountain or in a canoe? *I.* They are gods, *how could they drown?*—*F.* Were all animals and the birds drowned? *I.* Those now existing were created anew by the *Teotes*, as well as men and all things.—*F.* Are all the Indians ac-

quainted with what you have just told me? *I.* The priests of the temples and the caziques know it.—*F.* By whom are the *Teotes* served? *I.* The old men say that those who are slain in battle serve the *Teotes*, and that those who die in the natural way, go under the earth.—*F.* Which is most honorable, to go under the earth, or to serve the *Teotes*? *I.* By far to serve the the *Teotes*, because we shall then meet with our fathers.—*F.* But if your fathers have died in their beds, how can you meet them? *I.* Our fathers are themselves *Teotes*.—*F.* Can the *Teotes* bring the dead to life, and if so, where are the reawakened dead? *I.* All that I know is, that infants who die before they are weaned, and before they have tasted maize, will be raised again, and return to their fathers' houses, where their fathers will recognize and provide for them; whilst, on the other hand, those who die at a more advanced age will never come to life again.—*F.* But if the father should die before his children come to life again, how can he recognize or provide for them? *I.* If the fathers die, I know not what becomes of the children.—*F.* Finally what is their destiny? *I.* I know only what I have told you; and it must be true, because our fathers have told us so."

The Fray Bobadilla next questioned the cazique Abalgoalteogan, who also bore the name of Francisco, and who said he was a Christian. The Fray asked him, "if he was glad that he was a Christian?" to which he replied that, "he thought he was," and gave as a reason for his felicitation that only Christians went to heaven, while "all others went to hell with the devil." Being a more hopeful subject than the rest, the Fray proceeded to interrogate him. His testimony, as to the gods, coincided with that of Mizeztoy, and with him he affirmed that all knowledge concerning them was perpetuated by oral tradition; that formerly the priests had converse with the gods, but that since the arrival of the Christians, the latter had withdrawn from earth; that although the *Teotes* are of flesh, and male and female, yet that they are uncreated, immortal, enjoy eternal youth, and reside in the heavens. That the earth was once destroyed by water, and became a great sea, and that afterwards *Famagostad* and *Zipaltonal* descended, dispersed the waters, and recreated all things. That of the dead, the good alone go above with

the *Teotes*, the bad to a subterranean abode named *Miquetanteot;* that there is no resurrection of the body, but by the act of death "there comes forth from the mouth something which resembles the person, called *julio*, which goes to the place of the *Teotes*. It is immortal: but the body decays forever." The good are those "who take care of the temples, and observe the laws of friendship; the wicked are those who do differently, and they are sent under the earth."

The Fray next interrogated an old man, past sixty years of age, named Tacoteyda, who was a priest in one of the temples of Nicaragua. When he was asked if he was a Christian, he said No, that he was old, and why should he become a Christian? Whereupon the Fray told him, that if he became a Christian, it would be a source of great good to him here and hereafter; but that if he did not, he would inevitably go to the devil. But the old priest was firm in his own faith, and would not be baptized. He concurred entirely with the others, in representing *Famagostad* and *Zipaltonal* as themselves uncreated, the creators of heaven and earth, and the greatest of gods. He added, that they were like the Indians themselves, forever young, dwelt in the heavens towards the rising of the sun, and that their aid in war, or for other purposes, previously to the arrival of the Christians, was procured by addressing petitions to heaven.

Tacoteyda testified that *Famagostad* and *Zipaltonal* received to themselves, at their abiding place in the eastern heavens, those who had lived worthily, or had been slain in battle, but that all others were sent under the earth; that those who went above did not carry their bodies with them, but only *a heart*, or rather that which was the cause of life, and which in departing from the body caused death. The Fray asked him what the gods would do when all men ceased to live. To which the Indian priest replied, very frankly, that he did not know; nor did he know anything of a flood which had destroyed the world. Altogether, his examination does not

appear to have been satisfactory to the Fray Bobadilla, who dismissed him, and sent for an Indian named Coyen, who was very aged, exceeding eighty years, and whose head was white as cotton wool. He said he was a Christian, or rather that water had been poured on his head, and he had had a new name given him, which, however, he had forgotten. His testimony, in respect to the gods, confirmed what had been said by the others; they were immortal—resembled the Indians—were ever young—dwelt on high—anciently communicated with the priests in the temples, but did so no longer, and loved the blood and hearts of children, and the perfume of resins. He had heard, from his ancestors, that the world had been destroyed by water in remote times, and that none were saved, but that the gods had created the world anew. The good went on high with the *Teotes*, the bad below the earth. The body putrefied in the ground, but the principle of life, which dwelt in the heart, and which was immortal, went above.

Upon the 30th of the same month, the Fray resumed his inquiries, and called up the chief of Naxoita, whose name was Quibiat, a comparatively young man, who was not a Christian, but desired to become one, whereat Bobadilla was so delighted, that he not only baptized him, but gave him his own name. The Fray undoubtedly thought he had found a profitable subject, but Quibiat answered every question with "I do not know!" So he was sent off, and an Indian named Atochinal called in, who, although but a sorry Christian, nevertheless answered all the questions put to him, in precisely the same way with those who had been previously examined, except that he did not know whether the world was destroyed by fire or water, only that his fathers said that it had been destroyed.

The Fray afterwards collected thirteen Indians, priests, caziques, and others, and made various inquiries of them, which, with their answers, are given below. It should be

remembered, however, that the Fray was now amongst the Niquirans, or people of Mexican stock. The Fray first asked them if they were the original inhabitants of the country; to which they answered, that although their ancestors had been here from time immemorial, they were not the true aborigines, but came originally from a distant country called *Ticomega Emaguatega*, which was situated towards the west, i. e. N. W. They quitted because they had masters who ill treated them.

"*Friar.* Were these masters Indians or Christians? *Indian.* Indians.—*F.* What was the service which was required of your fathers? *I.* They tilled the ground, and served their masters as we now serve the Christians. Their masters overtasked, abused, and even ate them. It was fear which induced them to emigrate. Their masters came from another country, and by numbers and force overcame them.—*F.* What is your religion? Whom do you worship? *I.* We adore *Famagostad* and *Zipaltonal*, who are our gods,—*F.* Who sends you rain and all other things? *I.* The rain is sent by *Quiateot*, son of the god *Home-Atelite* and the goddess *Home-Ateciguat.* They dwell at the extremity of the world, where the sun goes. —*F.* Have they ever lived on earth? *I.* No.—*F.* From whence do they come. *I.* We know not.—*F.* Who made the heavens and earth, and all things else? *I. Famagostad and Zipaltonal.*—*F.* Did they make the father and mother of Quiateot? *I.* No; what relates to water is an entirely different thing, but we know very little of the matter.—*F.* Has Quiateot a wife? *I.* No.—*F.* Who serve him? *I.* We think he ought to have servants, but we know not who they are.—*F.* What does he eat? *I.* What we do; for our food has come from the gods.—*F.* Which do you regard as the most powerful, the father, mother, or son? *I.* They are equal to one another.—*F.* When do you ask for rain, and what do you do to obtain it? *I.* We go to the temple dedicated to him, and sacrifice some young children. After having cut off their heads, we sprinkle the blood on the images and stone idols in the house of prayer consecrated to our gods, and which, in our language, is called *Teobat.*—*F.* What do you do with the bodies of the sacrificed? *I.* Those of the children we bury; those of the men are eaten by the caziques and chiefs, but not by the rest of the people.—*F.* When this is done, does the god send you rain? *I.* Sometimes he does, but sometimes not.—*F.* Why do you go to the temples, and what do you say and do there? *I.* The temples are to us

what the churches are to Christians; there are our gods, and there we burn perfumes in their honor; we ask of them health if we are sick; rain if it is needed, for we are poor, and if the earth should be parched we can have no fruits;—in short, we ask of them all things of which we stand in need. The principal cazique enters the temple and prays in the name of all; the rest of the Indians do not enter. The cazique remains there for prayer an entire year, and during that time never leaves the temple. When he comes forth a great festival is celebrated in his honor, with dancing and feasting. His nostrils are then pierced, to show that he has been pontiff of the temple, which is esteemed to be the greatest of honors. Another chief is then sought to take his place, so that there may always be one in the temple. As to those temples, which are only a kind of oratorio, any one can place in them one of his children; and any one who desires may enter, provided he is unmarried, and on condition of not having had connection with any woman for an entire year; that is to say, until the caziques and priests who are in the temple shall have come out.—*F.* Are married persons who are willing to quit their wives and go into the temples, suffered to do so? *I.* Yes. But at the expiration of the year they must return to their wives, and if caziques, resume their government.—*F.* How are they provided with food? *I.* It is brought to them by children from the house of the priests, and during all the time they are in the temple no one can enter it beyond the vestibule, except those young persons who carry provisions.—*F.* While in the temple do they converse with the gods? *I.* For a long time our gods have not visited or conversed with us. If our ancestors may be believed, they were once in the habit of doing so. All that we know is, that the person charged with praying to the gods, asks of them all things needful.—*F.* In time of war, do they come forth from the temple? *I.* No. The vestibule of the temple is very convenient for meeting.—*F.* Who clean and sweep the temples? *I.* Young boys only; married or old men take no part in the matter.—*F.* Have you, during the year, any prescribed days of general attendance at the temple? *I.* We have twenty-one festival days for amusement, drinking and dancing around the court, but no one is permitted to enter the temple.—*F.* Do the women take any part in collecting the straw, bringing wood, or anything else which may be of use either in building or repairing the temple? *I.* The women can take no part in anything which concerns the temple, and are never admitted within it.—*F.* Since you sometimes sacrifice women, do you not violate the law which forbids them from entering the temple? *I.* When women are sacrificed in the temples or principal houses of prayer, they are first put to death in the court; but it is allow-

able to introduce them into the ordinary temples.—*F.* What do you do with the blood of those who are sacrificed in the courts of the principal temples? *I.* It is brought into the temple, and the priest sprinkles it on the idols with his hands.—*F.* What do you do with the body? *I.* It is eaten; except the bodies of females, which are not touched. When the victim is a man, the priest has his share.—*F.* Are those who are sacrificed voluntary victims? are they selected by lot? or is it a punishment inflicted upon them? *I.* They are slaves, or prisoners of war.—*F.* As you esteem your gods so much, how can you sacrifice persons of infamous condition to them? *I.* Our ancestors did so, and we do likewise.—*F.* Do you make any other offerings in your temples? *I.* Every one brings such offerings as he pleases, such as fowls, maize, fish, fruits, etc. They are carried to the temple by the young people.—*F.* Who eats these offerings? *I.* The priests of the temple; and if any remains, it is eaten by the boys.—*F.* Are the provisions cooked before being carried to the temple? *I.* Always.—*F.* Does any one taste of these offerings before the priest? *I.* No one presumes to touch or taste of them before him; for this is considered one of the most important regulations of the temple.—*F.* Why do you make a self-sacrifice by cutting the tongue? *I.* We always do this before we purchase, sell, or conclude a bargain, because we believe it will bring us a fortunate result. The god we invoke on such occasions is named *Mixcoa.*—*F.* Who is your god *Mixcoa?* *I.* Carved stones, which we invoke in his honor.—*F.* How do you know this god will aid your bargains? *I.* Because when we invoke him, we make good bargains.—*F.* Has Nicaragua ever been visited by any other nation than the Spaniards, who might have taught you all these ceremonies, ordered you to pour water on your heads, or to cut off the foreskin? and did you know that the Christians were on the eve of coming to your country? *I.* We know nothing of all this; but since you have come among us, you have told us it was good to pour water on the head, and to be baptized.—*F.* What is it that is cleansed by pouring water on the head? *I.* The heart.—*F.* How do you know that the heart is cleansed? *I.* We only know that it purifies us; it is the duty of your priests to explain how.—*F.* At your death how do you dispose of your property, and what precautions do you take for another life? *I.* When we die, we recommend our children and property to our survivors, that they may not perish, but be taken care of after we are dead. He who lives a good life, after death goes on high among the *Teotes;* if a bad one, below the earth.—*F.* Who are your gods? *I. Famogostad* and *Zipaltonal;* and when we go to them they say, "here come our children!"—*F.* Why do you break the idols upon your tombs? *I.* In order that they may think

of us for twenty or thirty days; after that they forget us.—*F.* Why, at the death of any one of you, do you paint yourselves with red paints, decorate yourselves with plumes, singing, playing on instruments, and celebrating festivals? *I.* We do nothing of the kind. When our children die, we envelop them in cotton cloth, and bury them before our doors. We leave all our property to our children, who are our heirs, if legitimate; that is to say, the children of a husband and wife, and born in the house; but they are not our heirs, if born of other women, or out of the house; for those only are legitimate, who are born in the house. If we die without children, all we possess is buried with us.—*F.* What are your funeral ceremonies? *I.* Upon the death of a chief or cazique, a large quantity of cotton cloth, shirts, cloaks, plumes, hunting horns, and all sorts of articles belonging to the dead, a portion of each kind, is burned with the body, together with all the gold he possessed. Afterwards all the ashes are gathered together, placed in an earthen vase, and buried before the house of the deceased.—*F.* Why do you not bury them in your temples? *I.* Because it is not customary. —*F.* Do you place provisions in the vase? *I.* At the time of burning, a little maize is placed in a calabash, by the side of the dead body, and burned with it.—*F.* The heart, *julio*, or soul, does it die with the body? *I.* If the deceased has lived well, the *julio* goes on high with the gods; if not, it perishes with the body and is no more.—*F.* Do the Indians see anything at the moment of dying? *I.* They have visions of persons, lizards, serpents, and many things which fill them with fear. They know thereby that they must die. The objects which they see do not speak, but strive to frighten them. Sometimes the dead return to this world, and appear to the living for the same object.—*F.* Do not the crosses placed above the dead, by the Christians, protect them? *I.* Much; for since this practice of the Christians was introduced, we have no more visions.—*F.* Who taught you to give your idols the form which they have? *I.* Our fathers left us idols of stone, and from them, as models, have we made those in our houses.—*F.* Why do you have them in your houses? *I.* That we may easily invoke them when necessary.—*F.* Do you sacrifice to the idols in your houses? *I.* No.

"*Friar.* Before your temples stand earthen huts of a circular form, and terminating in a point; they resemble a sheaf of grain in appearance; the summit is reached by a stairway through the middle of the hut: what is the name of these huts, and what is their use? *Indian.* Their name is *Tezarit;* the priest of the temple, whose name is *Tamagoz*, ascends to the summit of the hut, and there makes the sacrifices of the victims, sprinkling their blood on the stone idols."

The Fray Bobabilla afterwards continued his inquiries in respect to other matters, with what results will be seen elsewhere. He ascertained that the god of hunger was called *Vizetot*, and the god of the air *Chiquinau* or *Hecact*, which last was probably intended for *Ehecatl*, the Mexican name for air or wind. He also ascertained the names of the days of their months, which entirely coincided with those of Mexico, as also many interesting facts connected with their religious ceremonies. They affirmed that they had twenty-one principal festivals each year, on which occasions no work was done, but the entire people surrendered themselves to rejoicing, and the observance of the rites prescribed for these occasions. During these periods they abstained from all connection with their wives; the females sleeping within the houses, and the males without. This abstinence was deemed most essential, and any infraction, it was supposed, would be summarily punished by the gods. It does not appear that fasting was enjoined on any occasion. The Spaniards were very much surprised, both here and in Mexico, at finding a well-established rite, corresponding entirely with that of confession, as it existed in the Catholic Church. The confession was not, however, made to the priests, but to certain old men, who always maintained the strictest reserve, in respect to what was communicated to them. The penances were imposed for the benefit of the temple. These old men were chosen by the council, and wore a calabash suspended from their necks, as a mark of dignity. It was requisite that they should be unmarried, and distinguished for their virtues. Neglect of religious ceremonies and blasphemy of the gods, were regarded as offences requiring early confession and absolution, lest they should entail sickness or death on the offender. No person was required to confess himself, however, until after he had attained the age of puberty.

They seem to have had a great variety of superstitious notions, corresponding generally with those prevailing

amongst the other Indian nations, both to the northward and southward. Amongst these was the practice of throwing sticks or grass upon certain stones at the road side, in passing; by which they thought they would be less subjected to hunger and fatigue. They had also a superstition something like that of the "evil eye," amongst the Arabs and some other Oriental nations. They supposed that there were persons whose looks were mortal, and whose eyes were fatal to children. They had, also a great fear of sorcerers, whom they called *texoxes*.

Oviedo has not described the temples to which he so frequently refers, but Cerezeda informs us that they were built of timber, and thatched; but large, with many low, dark, inner chapels. These, it seems, were surrounded by large courts, beyond which none except the priests and the cazique during his year's novitiate, dared to pass. Besides these, there were what the Indians called *Tzarit*, oratories, or "high places," which stood before or around the temples, and which Oviedo describes as being conical or pyramidal in shape, ascended by steps. Upon these the human victims were sacrificed. "Within view of their temples," says Cerezeda, who is more explicit, "there were divers bases or pillars like pulpits, erected in the fields, of unburned brick, and a certain kind of clammy earth, called bitumen, which are from eight to fifteen steps in height. The summit is flat, and varies in size, according to the purposes for which it is designed. Some are broad enough to hold ten men. In the middle of this space standeth a stone, higher than the rest, equalling a man's body in length; and this accursed stone is the altar of their miserable sacrifices. Upon the appointed day of sacrifice, the king ascendeth another of these altars, whence he may view the ceremony, and the people gather about; when the priest, in full view of all, from this eminent place, performeth the office of preacher, and shaking a sharp knife of stone which he holds in his hand, proclaims that a

sacrifice is to be made, as also whether it is to be a prisoner, or one who is a slave, or has been kept from infancy for this purpose. For every chief maintains certain persons for sacrifice, who are fed daintily, and so far from being sad and sorrowful, in anticipation of their fate, are persuaded that, by this kind of death, they shall be turned into gods and heavenly creatures. They are reverently received wherever they go, and whatever they ask is given to them. Those to be sacrificed are stretched out flat on the stone whereof I have spoken, and the priest, cutting open the breast, plucks out the heart, wherewith he anoints the mouths of the idols. The body is then cut in pieces, and distributed amongst the priests, nobility, and the people. But the head is hung, as a trophy, upon the branches of certain small trees, which are preserved for that purpose near the place of sacrifice. The parts which are distributed they partly bury before their doors, but the rest they burn, leaving the ashes in the field of sacrifice."

According to Herrara, the high-places above described, stood within the courts of the temples. He also informs us, that the sacrifices were frequently attended by ceremonies, in which all the people joined,—by dances, penances, and processions. In these processions, the priests wore cotton surplices, sometimes short, and sometimes long, hanging to the ground and heavily fringed. They carried also little bags of powdered herbs. The people followed, each person bearing a little flag, "with the representation of the idol which he most venerated," and carrying also their weapons of war. "Their standard," quaintly observes the chronicler, "was the picture of the devil set on a spear, and carried by the eldest priest, the religious men singing the while, to the place of worship. The ground was then covered with carpets, and strewed with flowers. When the standard halted, the singing ceased, and all commenced praying. At a signal from the chief priest, they punctured various parts of their bodies,

and receiving the blood on paper, rubbed it on the face of the idol; and, in the mean time, the youths skirmished and danced in honor of the festival. The wounds were cured with the powder and herbs carried by the priests." "The ceremonies ended," says Cerezeda, "the priests bow down the spear a little, at which time, the priests first, and then the nobles, and lastly the people, whisper the idol in the ear, and every one uttereth the tempestuous outrage of his mind, and bending the head to one shoulder, with reverent trembling and mumbling, they humbly beseech that, luckily and happily, he would favor their desires."

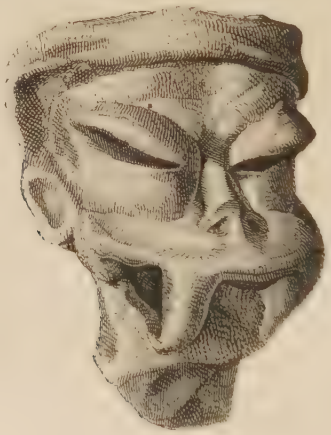
There was another rite, practised at certain times, connected with a worship which prevailed to a greater extent in America than has generally been supposed, and which discovers to us the rationale of many remarkable observances otherwise inexplicable. It consisted in sprinkling blood, drawn from the organs of generation, upon maize, which was afterwards distributed, and eaten with great solemnity. This scenical rite, under one form or another, may be traced through the rituals of all the semi-civilized nations of America, in strict parallelism with certain Phallic rites of the Hindus, and of those other numerous nations of the old world, which were devoted to a similar primitive religion.

The Fray Bobadilla was piously indignant at the practices of the Indians, and longed to be able to prove to them how insignificant their *Teotes* were as compared with the God and his subordinates whom he worshipped. In this respect he was favored, for there were several manifestations from above in his behalf, hardly less extraordinary than those which befel the Spaniards in Mexico, where the Virgin and the archangel Michael visibly, and in person, assisted in the fights against the Indians. Thus, there had been no rain in Nicaragua for a long time; but upon the Fray's arrival at the Indian towns, it rained for five consecutive days, which he regarded as a miracle, and straightway assured the Indians if

they would become Christians, "it would rain whenever it was wanted, the seasons always be good, and that, besides, they would thereby save their souls." The Indians approved of the rain, and in order to secure it, allowed the Fray to collect "a large number of idols, heads of deer, and parcels stained with blood, in the public square, and give them to the flames." They even allowed him to convert their temple into a Christian church, which he did by sprinkling it with holy water, and setting up within it a cross and an image of the Virgin, which last he especially enjoined them to keep clean. According to the notary of Granada, quoted by Oviedo, the Fray baptized not less than 43,000 Indians within the space of nine days; this was at the average rate of about 5,000 a-day, and may be called a "fair business." But the miracle of the five days' steady rain was nothing compared with what happened to the Fray in the province of Matearas, where he found a child dying, to which he administered the rite of baptism, whereupon the babe ejaculated "*cruz!*" and died! This so astonished the mother, that she requested to be baptized also, which was no sooner done, than she exclaimed that she saw her child ascending to heaven. The child had a magnificent funeral in consequence, and the Fray made the most of the miracle, inducing not less than ten thousand Indians to be baptized on the strength of it.

But the zeal of Bobadilla did not stop here; he burned "a vast number of idols, temples, and oratorios, erected crosses on their ruins, as also on the roads and elevations, and gave the Indians images of the Virgin and a quantity of holy water." But the chronicler did not put much faith in these conversions; for he says that he would agree to give a *peso de or* for every Indian able to tell his baptismal name, and repeat the Pater and Ave, and take a *maravedi* for every one who could not, and make money by the operation. In his opinion these baptisms did no good, and were only valuable to swell reports to be sent to Spain. "Far better," he sensibly

ejaculates, "is it to instruct and truly Christianize one Indian, than to baptize thousands, who know not what it is to be a Christian, or what to do to be saved. I should like to ask those," he continues, "who have been god-fathers to four and five hundred Indians, what they have done for their god-children?"



TERRA COTTA FROM OMETEPEC. ONE-FOURTH SIZE.

OUTLINE

OF

POLITICAL HISTORY.

OUTLINE

OF

POLITICAL HISTORY.

CHAPTER I.

THE SPANISH-AMERICAN REPUBLICS—THE CAUSES OF THEIR FAILURE.

The Spanish-American Republics, from their birth, have exhibited a spectacle full of sorrow to the friends of free institutions throughout the world. Their general history has been one of anarchy and blood, with scarcely a page from which we do not turn in horror and disgust. The partizan struggles which, in our own country, come and go like a summer storm, agitating the public mind for an instant, but leaving it all the quieter when past, have been marked in these Republics by a spirit of fierce intolerance, which can only be born of the deadliest antagonism, and of which few among us can form any adequate conception.

The first effort of a triumphant party is not only to crush but exterminate its opponent; and it does not hesitate to adopt the extreme measures of confiscation, exile, and death, for the attainment of its objects. So long as it wields the

power, it is absolute, tyrannical, despotic. He who entertains principles or opinions counter to the dominant faction, must guard his words and actions, under peril to property and life.

The consequences are plain and inevitable; they are hate, distrust, intrigue, and revolution. The gall which here flows in harmless, inky torrents, through an untrammelled press, and the energy which exhausts itself in the forum, or dies away in idle reverberations in the domes of our legislative halls, there rankles in the heart of the man who feels himself the victim of proscription and oppression, and nerves him for deeds which would chill the blood of our bitterest partisan, after the depletion of a newspaper article, or an hour's harangue: and the skill in combination and arrangement, which with us is devoted to no worse purpose than that of packing conventions, dictating the decrees of a caucus, and canvassing a city, finds scope and verge enough in deep-laid, perilous plots against the existing order of things,—for whatever the tendency of that order, it wears the garb of wrong.

This intolerance precludes the existence of parties,—as we understand them,—of parties which are the safeguards of every free commonwealth, and necessary to its healthful existence. Precluded from a free expression of opinions, and shut off from legitimate action, every opposition is driven to move in secret conclave, and its measures bear the form, if they do not conceal the spirit, of treason. Discovery is persecution, perhaps death; and scarce a possibility of relief or change is offered, except through that last and most dangerous resort, Revolution.

It is easy to conceive how a system of detestable espionage on one hand, and a scarcely less detestable system of intrigue on the other, must spring up under such a condition of things. The man of the opposition, however laudable his objects or pure his motives, becomes of necessity a conspirator; and every conspirator is, by equal necessity, a prey to

suspicion, which, in its turn, where the perils are so great, under some real or fancied necessity, leads to treachery, and entails a long series of bloody revenges.

The disastrous results of these conditions, are not only felt in the general political system, but in every part of the social and civil body. Law, that sacred intangibility, which, next to God, merits and should receive the respect and obedience of men, here loses its divinity, and, confounded with the tyranny and the bad passions and impulses of the men who should be its impartial ministers, but who wield its terrors for the worst of purposes, is despised and contemned. That religious deference from which it derives its majesty and force, and without which it degenerates into a pretext, is utterly destroyed, and society is resolved into a chaos of conflicting elements, where might lords it over right, where life nor property is safe, and where neither honor, virtue, nor wisdom can long survive.

It will, no doubt, be conceded, indeed it is evident, that the demoralization of the Spanish American Republics, is the proximate cause of the intolerance which we have pointed out. But whence has this demoralization resulted? The Spanish character is not deficient in many of the best attributes of humanity; the Spanish people are not less susceptible to lofty impulses than our own. There is not in their individual nor in their collective character anything which renders them incapable of exercising the rights, or enjoying rationally the benefits, of self-government. And those of our people who complacently ascribe the general failure of the Spanish Republics, to a radical, psychological defect of the Spanish race, commit a grievous, but a very natural, error. With the exception of Chili, all of them have been, thus far, undoubted failures. But it should be remembered, that the origin of these Republics was widely different from that of our own. Among all the impulses to colonization on this continent, we seek in vain for any of that exalted character which brought

our fathers hither. Amongst all the adventurers who flocked to America, our ancestors alone had practically solved the grand problems of civil and religious freedom. Very different was the advent of the little band of self-relying, earnest men, despising and despised of kings, who silently sought a refuge in a new continent, relying on their own right arms and their God for support, and that of the steel-cased cavaliers, the pride and flower of Spain, impelled by ambition and avarice, sustained by the proudest monarch of the globe, enjoying the full sunshine of royal favor, followed and cheered on by the enthusiasts of a proselyting faith, inflamed by the wildest dreams of conquest, and striking for the dominion of the earth.

On the one hand the world saw, taking deeper and wider root, a people jealous of their rights, securing every possible concession in their charters, resisting every encroachment on their privileges, and religiously excluding from their midst the aristocratic forms of the Old World, becoming daily more self-relying, and more imbued with the spirit, and familiar with the forms of self-government. The blessings and privileges of freedom came to them, as the reward of long, unwearying, enlightened endeavor; when attained, like the slowly accumulated competence of the laborer, they knew how to value and how to use them. Our revolution was the consummation of centuries of well-directed, rational effort for freedom.

In Spanish America, on the other hand, amidst the magnificence of the tropics, and the fragments of aboriginal greatness, became diffused a people, reflecting alike the splendors and the corruptions of a powerful court and of an arrogant aristocracy. The highest incentives to action were the favors of artificial and hereditary greatness, or the accumulation, by whatsoever means, of that wealth by which these favors might be purchased. The fame of those whose names fill the earlier pages of the history of this people, is

that of conquerors alone. They encountered unprecedented dangers, displayed an energy unparalleled in human achievement, overturned empires, and trod with bloody steps over more than half a continent. Yet it was for the aggrandizement of the crown of Castile and Leon alone; and the iron men who executed these great deeds, prostrated themselves before the throne of their sovereign, to receive their reward in marquisates, commands, and grants of lands and mines, and powers almost arbitrary over the conquered inhabitants of the New World. After them followed the Viceroys, emulating the kings of Europe in their regal pomp, and setting up mimic courts, amongst a new aristocracy, more rigorous and exacting than the old. Here, in short, were reproduced, in many of their most odious forms, the systems of monarchical Europe, followed by their entire train of corruptions in Church and State. Power and wealth, from the first, rapidly concentrated in the hands of the few; and ignorance and superstition brooded with leaden wings over the minds of the many. There were no longer empires to conquer; no more Montezumas and Atahualpas, upon whose humbled shoulders a new Cortez and Pizarro might rise to renown; and the years which followed were marked by none of those startling achievements which lend a lustre to wrong, and throw a glory over crime, blinding us to its enormity, and almost reconciling us to its contemplation. The Viceroyalties of Mexico, Guatemala, and Peru, were no longer the prizes of the brave and daring; they were filled by the arrogant minions of a court, and attained by arts which a Cortez and Alvarado would have scorned to use. A degenerate aristocracy filled the places of the conquistadors, and added the vices of effeminacy and indolence to the crimes of cruelty and oppression.

Under this order of things, nothing beyond a very qualified advance, on the part of the people, was possible. And this advance, such as it was, took place in spite of the obsta-

cles which this very order of things interposed. But it was not sufficiently great, to lead to a comprehension of what constituted the primary and essential elements of civil freedom. Truly Republican Institutions are the loftiest developments of human wisdom; and their existence pre-supposes, not only a general diffusion of knowledge, but high attainment in it, amongst the people at large. Their permanence depends upon the general intelligence and morality. In the Spanish American colonies, it is obvious, such attainment was impossible. They did not even keep pace with the meliorations and improvements, which the lapse of time was slowly but surely bringing about in Europe, and which even Spain herself could not resist. These colonies were borne down and restrained, not only by the weight of an irresponsible local government, imperial except in name, but by that of a decaying and exacting empire on another continent, which forced the life's blood from their veins to sustain its own languid existence,—a double curse, which those colonies most deeply felt, but which they knew not how to remove. The sense of wrong was keen amongst their people, but their ideas of redress were vague and indefinite; rather the offspring of the instincts of self-preservation and revenge, than the suggestions of reason and experience.

In due course of events, by a series of regular advances, came on our own revolution,—a struggle for objects clearly defined and well understood. It was successful, and the proximate cause of that great civil and moral convulsion, which burst the ligatures that priestcraft and kingcraft had been binding, fold on fold, for a thousand years, on the passive limbs of Europe, and which we call the French Revolution. Events like these, in spite of Viceroys, and edicts of suppression, and the whole machinery of despotism, could not be kept unknown to the world. The Indian, brooding over his wrongs in the deep valleys of the Andes, or delving in mines of El Pasco in Peru, the Creole, on the narrow

slopes of Chili, or the higher plains of Mexico, and around the volcanoes and broad lakes of Central America, heard the distant tread of revolutions,—and his heart leapt, his eye kindled, and his muscles tightened as he heard. The leaven sank deep in the Spanish American Colonies, and thoughts of change, and high aspirations for the future, too often darkened by hate and jealousy, and not always unmingled with the wild longings for retribution and revenge, thenceforth filled the minds of their people.

Continental Spain early felt the shock of the Revolution in France; hoary with abuses, and blackened with corruption, yet glorious in recollections, the crumbling fabric of her greatness fell, never to rise again. Her mission of conquest and propagandism was ended, and all that was, or is, or will be left of her, is her Great Past! Yet in her fall, the colonies, like the ivy around the old tower which the earthquake has prostrated, still clung to the ruins. The power of the Viceroys was fresh and strong, while that of the King was weak. They still cherished their allegiance for the throne of Ferdinand and Isabella, although profaned by a Bonaparte, and surrounded by foreign bayonets; and exhibited to the world the singular spectacle of an empire vigorous at the extremities, while dead at the heart. There was something admirable in the devotion with which they clung to their traditions. Even the colonists themselves forgot for a moment their grievances and wrongs, in recollection of their past glories and greatness, and in contemplation of the land of their fathers, the dominions of the Fifth Charles, prostrate and powerless at the feet of France. Spain, harsh, exacting, cruel, was still their mother country; and so far as patriotism consists in simple love of country, the Spaniard and his descendant is always a patriot. The Creole girl, though centuries intervene, and her ancestral blood has been fed from a hundred diverse springs, still cherishes with pride the lute-like, liquid pronunciation of her Andalusian ancestors; or in

indignant reply to an unacceptable proposal, with the brow of a Catherine, and the lip of a queen, ejaculates, "*Soy una Catalina!*" I am a Cataline girl!

With the restoration in Spain, the feeling of patriotic sympathy among the Spanish colonists died away, and they felt, in the still unrelenting rule of the Viceroys, that the reforms which that restoration had brought about in Europe, were not for them. The Viceroys, on the other hand, with the colonial aristocracy, and the priesthood—themselves, in their almost unlimited power and great wealth, constituting a most formidable ecclesiastical oligarchy,—saw with alarm the progress of these very reforms. The representative principle had been introduced into Spain; the power of the monarch, hitherto practically absolute, had been limited; the aristocracy reformed; the clergy shorn of its undue privileges; primogeniture abolished; and the great principle of "*Igualidad ante la Ley*," Equality before the Law, boldly promulgated. They feared the spread of the spirit of liberalism, which had worked these marvellous changes at home. Nor were their fears unfounded. In spite of distance, in spite of ages of depression, although ignorance and superstition held almost absolute sway in the Spanish colonies, rays of the new light reached America, and men were found who began to talk boldly of human rights, and to hint at their future recognition. The voice of Freedom, grateful to the rudest ear, had its thousands of listeners. It fell upon the depressed people like strains of music upon the savage, in a whirl of exciting and pleasurable emotions. Vague hopes of an unknown future, shone out upon the clouds which enveloped them. The more enlightened enthusiasts dreamed of a Utopia about to be realized; the Creole, of a new order of things, in which he should stand equal with the highest; the Indian of the return of those traditional, glorious days, when the democracy of Tlascalla, like that of Sparta, had its simple but severe laws, wisely adapted to its own wants and condition, and

when their fathers wore no hated foreign yoke; but few, if any, entertained any clear idea of what constituted true Republicanism, or comprehended the processes by which its enjoyment might be attained and secured. The best, not to say the wisest among them, like the revolutionists of France, fell into the error of supposing that a people weary of tyranny, and enthusiastic for freedom, were of necessity able to comprehend its requirements, and fulfill its conditions, while they enjoyed its latitudes. Republics are of slow growth; they are, to a certain extent, the results of that high development of humanity which they are, in turn, adapted to perfect. While then the more abstract truths of Republicanism were promulgated with eloquence and force, the means for the attainment of rational freedom were lost sight of, or but imperfectly recognized. Separation from Spain was the first, grand, practical object kept in view; this accomplished, it was deemed all else that was needful or desirable would follow.

It has been a subject of remark, with many perhaps of surprise, that the dismemberment of the Spanish empire, and the independence of its American colonies, were so easily accomplished. That it was, in great part, due to the weakness of the mother country, is indisputable. But there were other causes favoring that result, to which we shall briefly allude.

The aristocratic portion of the Spanish American population, by which is meant not only those who held places or derived importance from their connection with the government, but those also whose principles were monarchical and exclusive in their tendency, including the vast body of the richly endowed priesthood, were not only astonished at the spread of liberal principles at home, but feared that the sweeping reforms there effected would extend to America, and reach their own body. They trembled for their prescriptions and privileges. But self-confident and presumptuous, claiming to possess the education, and most certainly

possessing the wealth of the colonies, and the power which it confers, they saw with less alarm the development and promulgation of liberal ideas in America. And when the cry of "*Separation from Spain*" was raised, they caught it from the lips of the people, and made it almost unanimous. In this separation they saw not only their present security, but the perpetuation of their cherished powers and privileges. The Viceroy hoped, from the reflex and representative of an emperor, to become himself a king, to shine with original not borrowed lustre; and the aristocracy to rise from a colonial dependency to a national rank and independence. They looked forward to the establishment of a political and priestly oligarchy, which should dominate over the ignorant masses, with more than their present powers and distinctions. Thus the absolutism, the old intolerances, the prejudices, and corruptions of Spain, born of priestcraft and tyranny, took refuge in America, and made their final stand against the progress of liberal sentiments. The heterogeneous union thus effected, for the accomplishment of the single object of separation from Spain, was successful. Except in Mexico and Colombia, and some of the seaport strongholds of South America, this result was achieved with scarce a struggle. Spain confided in her colonial officers to maintain the integrity of the empire; and when these failed her, she knew too well her own weakness to prolong a contest, which our own revolution had shown her must be hopeless. Nowhere was the separation effected with greater unanimity, and more easily, than in Central America; and to that country do we more particularly refer, in the pages which follow.

But no sooner was the separation effected, hardly had the mutual congratulations upon that result been exchanged, when the people called, in a voice of thunder, for absolute independence, on the basis, so far as they could comprehend it, of the great Republic of the North.

And now commenced that deadly, uncompromising strug-

gle between the two grand antagonistic principles which we have indicated; represented, on one side, by a rich and powerful aristocracy, and a jealous and beneficed clergy, and on the other, by the people, sensible of their abstract rights, rich only in their devotion, but enthusiastically attached to what they understood to be Liberty and Republicanism; between, in short, what in Mexico and Central America have been called the *Serviles* and *Liberals*;—names which we shall henceforth use, for the sake of easy distinction. From a struggle for supremacy, it is easy to perceive, how this contest became one of extermination; for there can be no compromise, no fusion, between principles so implacably hostile as those which now divided the Spanish American colonies. Hence has resulted, in great part, that fierce intolerance which I have pointed out and deplored at the commencement of this chapter; and hence that series of revolutions and counter-revolutions, which have hitherto distracted the Spanish American States, and in which the great mass of our people see only the rivalship of petty chieftains, and partisan struggles for ascendancy.

Our own revolution was little beyond a contest for the form of Republicanism; its substantial advantages had already been won slowly and in detail, the fruits of a series of popular advances, commencing at Runymede, where the barons broke the sceptre of absolutism, and practically triumphing under the commonwealth, when Cromwell struck down with iron glaive both king and barons. The deadly encounters between the two principles, which, with us, ran through a period of centuries, in the Spanish American States have been concentrated within the shorter period of years. The revolution is still going on; the rights of man are not yet fully vindicated; the triumph of Republicanism not yet attained; the downfall of Servilism not yet complete. It is most true the efforts of the Liberals have not always been wisely directed, and that by falling into the excesses of

their opponents, they have retarded and imperilled their own success. It is not less true that they had to operate more upon the feelings, and less upon the judgment of the people, than the leaders in our own emancipation; and in the frenzy of excitement, have been forced into the commission of deeds disgraceful to their cause, and which they were the first to deplore. But the odium of the bloodiest and most revolting features of the contest belongs not to them. The whole course of the Serviles has been marked by atrocity. They have shown neither tolerance, generosity, nor mercy; and have given a cast of brutality and barbarism to every struggle in which they have been engaged.

It is not my purpose to go into a detailed, political history of Central America, since the separation from Spain, much less of Mexico and the other States, in all of which might be traced the development and working of the principles and causes which I have pointed out. We have to deal only with generalities. It is, perhaps, enough, in the way of illustration, to refer to the success of the Serviles in Mexico, in the establishment of an ephemeral empire, under Iturbide. Their triumph, however, was brief; and with the fall of that short-lived empire, monarchy disappeared forever from the North American Continent.

CHAPTER II.

THE REVOLUTION IN CENTRAL AMERICA—STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE REPUBLICANS AND MONARCHISTS—TRIUMPH OF THE REPUBLIC. 1821–1823.

In no part of Spanish America were the abuses of Spain and the tyranny of her colonial system more conspicuous than in Central America, while it constituted the Captain-Generalcy or Kingdom of Guatemala. Her jealous colonial policy precluded the people of that wide region from any communication or relationship with the world at large. Foreigners were rigidly excluded from its shores, nor was emigration thither from Spain itself permitted, except under severe restrictions. The power of the mother country was systematically magnified, and the dependence and impotence of the colonies sedulously inculcated. The officers of the crown were allowed the largest prerogatives, and invested with almost unlimited powers, which were often used for the promotion of individual objects, and for purposes of personal aggrandizement. They had neither interests or sympathies in common with the people at large. With them was leagued a priesthood, rich, and wielding the powers of that terrible instrument of oppression, the Inquisition. Conjointly they were absolute and irresistible. The conquered aborigines became the passive slaves of their will, cultivating their estates without pay, and sustaining taxes from which the ruling classes were exempted. They were not permitted to ride their own mules or horses; and the stocks and the whipping-

post were the penalties for daring to stand covered in the presence of their despoilers!

I have already recited some of the causes which led to the overthrow of this order of things. As early as 1815 the first open expressions of discontent were manifested in Leon de Nicaragua. To that city belongs the glory of having given the first impulse to liberal sentiments in Central America. Although the movement was suppressed, yet it had the effect to arouse the popular mind, and direct the thoughts of men into the revolutionary channel, at the same time that it convinced the officers of the Government that an early and effectual separation from Spain was inevitable. The line of policy which they adopted, I have already indicated. True to their instincts, they sought to direct the gathering elements to their own advantage, and offered no effectual opposition to the preliminary arrangements for independence.

These arrangements were completed on the 15th of September, 1821, when the people of the city of Guatemala, and the representatives of the people at large, assembled in the Palace of the Audiencia, and proclaimed the independence of the country. The change was bloodless but decisive. Those who, from sympathy or position, were too closely identified with Spain, to join either in the Republican sentiment, or in the designs of those who sought independence as the means of securing supreme power in their own hands, quietly left the country, and retired unmolested to Cuba or Spain. The Serviles and the Liberals alone remained, and from that period dates the commencement of the unrelenting, and as yet undetermined contest, between the great antagonistic principles of which they are respectively the representatives.

It is not to be doubted, indeed, it is capable of proof, that the Serviles of Central America originally contemplated the establishment of an independent Kingdom or Monarchy, which should comprise the provinces belonging to the ancient Kingdom of Guatemala. But the Provisional Junta which

was convened immediately after the separation, showed a large majority of Liberals, who, in spite of the efforts of the astonished and almost paralyzed Serviles, proceeded to administer the oath of *absolute independence*, and to convoke a national Constituent Assembly which should organize the country on the basis of Republican Institutions. The Serviles were now suddenly and painfully aroused from their self-confident dreams; they found themselves in an impotent numerical minority; the people, which they had despised and expected easily to control, had come boldly forward and claimed their rights. In the meeting of the National Assembly and the proclamation of the Republic, they foresaw the destruction of their cherished hopes, and the loss not only of the new privileges and powers which they had hoped to gain from the separation, but of all that they had ever possessed. Under these circumstances they witnessed with anxious envy the establishment of an empire in Mexico; and, distrusting their own strength to resist the popular will, determined to forego a portion of their hopes, to secure the realization of the remainder. They sought the incorporation of Central America in the Mexican Empire, and demanded the assistance of the now triumphant Serviles of that country for the accomplishment of that object. The proposition flattered the vanity of Iturbide, the so-called emperor, and titles and decorations were asked and promised in anticipation of its success. Assured of this support, they took new courage, and with desperate zeal endeavored to turn the tide of popular feeling.

The Constituent Assembly, pursuant to the convocation of the Provisional Junta, nevertheless met in Guatemala, the richest and most populous city of the country, but unfortunately, from having been the seat of the viceregal court, the only city really devoted to the Servile interest. It was, in fact, and still is, the centre of Servilism; where all its plans are organized, and whence all its operations are directed.

The Assembly, notwithstanding all the efforts of the conspirators, who with pompous promises and golden dreams of opulence and felicity under the empire, had endeavored to seduce the ignorant and mercenary portion of the people into the support of their plans, and with partial success,—the Assembly, to their mortification and chagrin, showed a large majority of Liberals in its constitution. An attempt to corrupt this majority, signally failed; and then was made the first direct and open attack upon the popular party,—the initiative violence in that long series which has since distracted that devoted country, and brought it to the brink of utter ruin. The hall of the Constituent Assembly was blockaded by armed bands, and its deliberations forcibly suspended. A number of the most distinguished members among the Liberals were assassinated, and by treason, violence, and blood, Servilism gained its first triumph in Guatemala.

The people of Central America were scattered thinly over a wide country, and from their diffusion prevented from concentrating in support of their representatives. It was weeks after these events, while anxiously awaiting the promulgation of a Republican charter, that the unsuspecting people were startled by the proclamation of the Serviles, proposing the adhesion of the country to the Mexican Empire! Men stood aghast. Their leaders had fallen, or were incarcerated in the dungeons of Guatemala; and to crown their distress, treason stalked into their own ranks. Gainza, a weak but popular man, who had presided over the Provisional Junta, seduced by the promises of the Serviles, and delirious with the prospect of a brilliant advancement in the empire as the reward of his treachery, had joined the triumphant faction.

Stimulated by gold, confused bands of men now paraded the streets of Guatemala and the adjacent towns, invoking death on the leaders of the Liberal party, and demanding the proscription of all who adhered to them. They invaded the

houses of the Republicans, and added murder to robbery and pillage. But to give an appearance of formality to the meditated outrage, a spurious convocation was held, at the head of which, with practical irony, was placed the traitor Gainza. This convocation affected to submit the question of incorporation with the Mexican empire, *not* to the people, but to the decision of the municipalities and the army! The day was fixed for the trial, too early, however, to permit of returns to be received from any except the immediate dependencies of Guatemala. The army, reörganized by the usurpers, and made up of their instruments, stood ready to second and enforce their wishes. Few had the courage to oppose these proceedings, and they did so at the peril of their lives; and, as was to be anticipated, by the votes of a mercenary army, and of the alarmed and trembling municipalities, fraudulently computed, it was declared that the question of aggregation to the Mexican Empire was carried, and a decree to that effect was at once issued. A force, previously solicited from Mexico, was already on its march, under the command of Gen. Filisola, to effect, by foreign bayonets, the consummation of the treason thus successfully commenced.

As we have said, these movements of the Serviles were for a considerable period scarcely known beyond the immediate vicinity of Guatemala, and were unsustained by the people at large. No sooner did the people recover from their astonishment, than they set themselves to work to oppose the attempted usurpation. San Salvador, the nearest province to Guatemala, and the centre of Liberalism, was the first to hear of the events which we have recorded, and the first to adopt measures of resistance. The oligarchists felt their insecurity, and hastily despatched a force to check the demonstrations in San Salvador. The sturdy republicans of that little province as hastily took the field, and the Servile army, notwithstanding its superior numbers, was met and beaten. For the first time, but unfortunately not the last, the repre-

sentatives of the two great antagonistic principles, which we have undertaken to define, met on the battle field. The soil of Central America is drenched in blood, its energies are almost exhausted, and the end is not yet!

The patriots of San Salvador were seconded by the people of the flourishing cities of Granada in Nicaragua, and San Jose in Costa Rica. Leon, the capital of Nicaragua, however, became the scene of a severe struggle. The Bishop of the province had, from the beginning, opposed the popular movement, and now openly advocated the designs of the Serviles. The power of the Church had not yet been broken, and he was supported, not only by the aristocratic faction, but also by many whose bigotry overruled their judgment, or who were blind followers of the priesthood. This controversy led, subsequently, to scenes the most terrible, and ended in the almost entire devastation of the city—which, in its fall, permanently prostrated the Servile faction in Nicaragua.

The triumph of the Liberals in San Salvador, would have been fatal to the Serviles, and might have secured their downfall for ever. But almost simultaneously with the arrival in Guatemala of the news of their overthrow, the imperial forces of Iturbide reached that city. With renewed confidence, the Serviles rallied their despairing army, and the fratricides of Guatemala marched in company with troops of the empire, upon the victorious Liberals. Suffice it to say, after a long and bloody campaign, the forces of San Salvador were broken up, and her submission completed.

With this campaign commenced those atrocities, which, through retaliation and otherwise, have given to Central American warfare a character of savage barbarity, almost unprecedented in history. The mercenaries of Mexico acknowledged no restraint. They despised the soldiery with which they were associated, and when not in active duty, spread terror wherever they were quartered, alike amongst

friends and foes. The vilest outrages, rape, robbery, and murder, were of daily occurrence. Drunken soldiers swarmed the streets and public places of the towns and cities, and wantonly attacked and wounded, often slew, the first they encountered. The black flag of the empire was everywhere the signal for rapine; and blood and murder was the synonym of "Viva el Emperador!" The public treasury was exhausted, the rich robbed, and the public charities confiscated to support the foreign and mercenary forces; and the people, no longer enjoying the protection of law, and everywhere the victims of a brutal soldiery, were driven to defend their individual rights, and to revenge themselves in detail upon their oppressors,—thus aggravating the horrors of disorder and anarchy. The public demoralization was complete; and such was the second triumph of Servilism!

On the 5th of January, 1822, the Mexican Government had been proclaimed in Guatemala. And while the events which we have related were transpiring, Iturbide, by a decree, dated the 4th of November of the same year, decreed the division of the country into three Captain-Generalcies, viz: Chiapas, with its capital at Ciudad Real; Sacatapequez, with its capital at Guatemala; and Nicaragua, with its capital at Leon. In all, the officers were appointed from amongst the members of the Servile faction. Practically, however, no power was ever exercised under this attempted organization. San Salvador, though beaten in the field, was not conquered. Its Provisional Congress, notwithstanding that it was driven from place to place, remained intact, and defied the invaders of the province.

It was under these circumstances, and as a means of retaining its freedom, that this Congress resolved upon a step expressive of sympathies and sentiments, which still exist, vigorous and unchanged. It resolved upon annexation to the United States; and by a solemn act, on the 2d of December, 1822, decreed its incorporation with that Republic, whose

example sustained it in its adversity, and to which it naturally looked, "as the head of the great Republican family." It is not known that any action was taken upon this proposition, by the American Government. Fortunately, the triumph of Servilism was of short duration, and the immediate necessity for such action was obviated: for, in the midst of these events, came the startling news of the downfall of the empire of Iturbide, before the well-directed energies of the Liberals of Mexico. The forces of Filisola were at once disbanded, and the Serviles again thrown upon their own resources. Without exterior aid they were unable to sustain themselves for a moment, and they at once abandoned all opposition to the Republicans, who everywhere assumed the direction of affairs. Chiapas, partly from inclination, and partly from force of circumstances, chose to share its destinies with Mexico; but the remaining States, Nicaragua, Guatemala, San Salvador, Honduras, and Costa Rica, at once united in sending delegates to a Constituent Assembly, for the purpose of organizing the country upon a republican basis. The Serviles did not venture to oppose the meeting of this Assembly, but sought to bend it to their purposes. To this end they exerted their utmost skill and energy. They aimed to establish a practical dictatorship, which should some day, by an easy transition, resolve itself into their cherished form of a monarchy.

The deliberations of the Assembly terminated in the adoption of the Constitution of 1824. This, however, was contested, chapter by chapter, and section by section, but vigorously and triumphantly sustained by the Liberals. The guaranties of individual rights, the representative principle, *habeas corpus*, and the liberty of the press, were tacitly concurred in by the Serviles, because they feared to oppose them. But they were the first to be assailed and overthrown, when that party subsequently attained the ascendancy. The plan of federation contained in the new Constitution met with

their most determined hostility; and, looking to centralization, they as vehemently opposed the recognition of the local and internal powers, and qualified sovereignty of the several states. In this they were sustained by many of the Liberals themselves, who thought these provisions were not adapted to the present wants of the country.

The acts of this Assembly, apart from the promulgation of the Constitution, were of the most liberal and enlightened character. In the sweeping reforms which they were designed to effect, they remind us forcibly of the doings of the Republican Conventions of France. All titles and privileges of nobility were abolished, including the title of Don; the sale of Papal bulls was prohibited; all obstacles to emigration removed; the widest guarantees of security to foreigners and their property conceded; and finally the Republic was decreed under the name of "THE REPUBLIC OF CENTRAL AMERICA," with a national flag, having, for its armorial devices, five volcanoes, and bearing the motto, "Dios, Union, Libertad,"—God, Union, Liberty!

Amongst the acts of this Assembly, there is one which deserves more than a mere passing mention. By a decree of the 17th of April, 1824, it abolished slavery absolutely and at once, and provided against its reëstablishment, at any time, or in any part of the Republic. The Slave Trade was declared to be piracy, and the heaviest punishments were decreed against all persons who should engage in it, directly or indirectly. To Central America, therefore, belongs the glory of having been the first country in the world to abolish Negro Slavery. And, to the policy marked out by its first Constituent Assembly, it has ever and faithfully adhered. It was the adoption of this measure which led to its first dispute with Great Britain—that loud-mouthed advocate of philanthropy, when philanthropy is profitable, and never otherwise. Will it be credited that, as late as 1840, a claim, enforced by vessels of war, was made against Central America

by the British Government for slaves who had fled from Belize, and secured their freedom under the Constitution of Central America? Yet such is the fact—the black, damning fact![1]

The Constitution published on the 27th of December, 1823, was not decreed until the 22d of November, 1824. With its adoption, the Serviles seem for a while to have abandoned their unpatriotic opposition and insane designs. The enthusiasm of the people was at its height, and to oppose it was madness. In spite of many radical defects, and of many formidable assaults, this Constitution lasted for a whole decade, and exercised a most beneficial influence upon the country. Had the people at large possessed that general intelligence which prevailed amongst our own people, at the time they effected their independence, and which, while it gave them a clear insight into their own wants and requirements, preserved them from the arts and sophistry of demagogues and designing men,—then, no doubt, it would have been reformed and perpetuated, and given peace, happiness, and prosperity to the country. "Even as it was," observes a

[1] Upon this point we have the distinct testimony of a British subject, himself at that time a resident in Belize. He says: "As late as 1840, a claim was made by the British Government for the return to slavery of some Africans who had restored themselves to liberty by withdrawing from British Honduras, and settling under the protection of the Republic. The claim was moved by the British Consul General (Chatfield), and seconded by British officers, both military and civil, who were sent to Guatemala, to demand the persons of these poor Africans, and supported by the presence of a British vessel of war upon their coasts. But though the Government of the Republic was then weak and dismembered, there was moral rectitude and dignity enough in it to spurn the demand of a Government to which, on other matters, it had so long been accustomed to yield. In their reply they declared that no slaves were or could be recognized in their territories, the inviolability of which they asserted, although conscious of their lack of physical power to maintain it against such a foe."—*Gospel in Central America*,—p. 122.

Central American writer, "no one, whatever his prejudices, could fail to perceive the advance in the manners and customs, and the change in the spirit of the people of Central America, during the ten years of freedom of the press which this Constitution secured."

CHAPTER III.

THE REPUBLIC IN OPERATION—DEVOTION OF ITS SUPPORTERS—COMBINATION OF ITS ENEMIES—CIVIL WAR.
(1823—1828.)

SOMETIME previous to the adoption of the National Constitution, the people of San Salvador met in convention, and framed a State Constitution. It was decreed June 12, 1824, and a local government installed in conformity with its provisions. San Salvador, foremost in every liberal movement, was followed in succession by Costa Rica, January 2, Guatemala, October 11, Honduras, December 11, 1825, and Nicaragua, April 8, 1826. On the 6th of February, 1825, the Federal Representatives assembled in the city of Guatemala. They numbered thirty-four members, apportioned as follows:—Guatemala seventeen; San Salvador nine; Honduras six; Nicaragua six; and Costa Rica two. General Arce, distinguished more for his hostility to the Spanish rule than for his abilities or qualifications for the office, was elected President, and installed in office on the 29th of April following. In the same month, a Federal Senate, consisting, as in our own country, of two members from each state, also convened in Guatemala, and was organized by Mariano Beltraneno, Vice President of the Republic, and, in virtue of that office, President of the Senate.[1]

[1] At this time a Supreme Court of Appeals was established in Guatemala; Dr. T. A. Oberon, being the first President. All the States also appointed State Courts in place of the old Spanish tribunals, but the laws and customs, and most of the offices pertaining to the old courts were perpetuated.

The Republic was now fairly started. For a time affairs moved on smoothly; and the country, enjoying peace and quiet, made rapid strides in a career of improvement and prosperity. But the Serviles, though defeated, were not destroyed, and were active in sowing the seeds of discontent, wherever an opportunity was afforded them of exciting the prejudices or the jealousies of the people. In the city of Leon, as we have seen, the bishop, seconded by the bigots of the Church and the aristocratic faction, had strenuously opposed every movement towards a republic. His strength was principally concentrated in the city, although even there he was not in a numerical majority. Yet his adherents possessed most of the wealth of the place, which appeared to be controlled by them. This fact rendered Leon obnoxious to the liberal towns of the state, and originated a feeling of jealousy, which is not yet wholly eradicated. Every movement in that city was looked upon with suspicion. When, therefore, after some months of quiet, while the administration of affairs was still in the hands of the Provisional Government, the mob, incited by the bishop or his rash friends, exacted the removal of Basilio Carillo from the chief command, the event created a profound sensation throughout the state. Elated by their success, the anti-liberals followed up this violence by other similar demands. A reaction followed, and a counter-movement was made in the city itself, which was soon plunged into all the horrors of a civil war. The conflict was carried on with terrible energy, and without mercy upon either side. Ward was arrayed against ward, street against street, neighbor against neighbor, brother against brother, and father against son. The contest spread to the neighboring towns; partisans upon both sides took up arms, and rallied to the support of their respective friends in the capital. Here the contest was prolonged, with various successes, for one hundred and fourteen days. During this time a great part of the city, including

its best built and richest portion, was destroyed; a thousand dwellings, it is said, were given to the flames in a single night. Leon was reduced to a ruin; yet both parties maintained their ground with an obstinacy rarely paralleled in history. How long the contest would have been continued, it is impossible to say, had not General Arce entered the State, at the head of a body of Federal troops from San Salvador. This intervention restored peace; the Serviles and their adherents submitted to the overwhelming liberal sentiment of the Republic, and a treacherous calm rested for a while upon the surface of affairs.

The Liberal leaders, generally men of good education and lofty and patriotic aims, whose principal error was an undue confidence in the popular impulse (not to say judgment), in reviewing the struggle through which they had passed, failed not to discover that ignorance and priestcraft were the grand obstacles to the prosperity of the country—its foes, and the disturbers of its peace. The Church had arrayed itself openly on the side of the monarchical faction, and identified itself with those who had manifested their determination to ruin if they could not rule. But while that Church had no hold upon the Liberal leaders, who despised its dogmas and laughed at its forms, it still wielded a strong influence over the uneducated masses. Policy, therefore, forbade a direct and open warfare upon it, on the part of the Liberals. But rightly comprehending that general education is irreconcilable with popular superstition, and its most effective opponent, they directed their utmost endeavors to the diffusion of knowledge. The Lancasterian system of education had then been newly introduced in the United States and Europe. Schools upon this plan were hastily established in many of the towns; but they were inadequate to meet the public requirements. The people were enthusiastic to learn—means of education were everywhere demanded, but teachers were not to be found. In this emergency, the officers of the

government vindicated the principles which they professed, by volunteering their services, as teachers, in the intervals of their official duties. "The very barracks were converted into class rooms, and the barefooted Indian soldiers were instructed in the rudiments of knowledge by their officers." Never, before or since, has the world witnessed a more earnest devotion to the public good than was displayed by the Liberals during this period of their ascendancy, and until the hydra of Servilism again reared its crushed but unsevered heads.

In San Salvador, however, the people, better educated and more radical in their sentiments than in the other states, could not brook this slow process of undermining the fabric of the Church. Indignant at some assumptions of power on the part of the archbishop, who resided in Guatemala, and who was conspicuous for his reactionary sentiments, they asserted the broad principle that the people have the right to choose their religious as well as their civil leaders; and, acting accordingly, elected a Liberal priest, one of their own citizens, Dr. Delegado, Bishop of the State. The archbishop denounced the act, and the Pope himself, regarding it as an infringement on his prerogatives, not only disapproved of it, but demanded its revocation, under threats of excommunication against the entire people of the State. But the threat was received with cool defiance; and shortly after Costa Rica followed the example of San Salvador, in like disregard of the successor of St. Peter. These proceedings, to say the least, were impolitic, and tended to precipitate collisions, which, by disturbing the educational system, prolonged, if they did not strengthen, the power and influence of the Church, and saved it from the fate to which it was doomed by the slow but sure process of educational reform.

We now come to events which history sorrows to record. Five years had elapsed since the successful blow for independence had been struck. The attempt to establish a new

monarchy, or aristocratic oligarchy, had signally failed, and a liberal and truly republican government had been established, which had devoted itself to the amelioration of the country, with energy and success. With the exception of the disturbance in Leon, which was rather a local feud than a formal assault upon the new order of things, and a feeble attempt to revive the Spanish authority in Costa Rica, no open opposition had been made to the Republic. But while peaceful on the surface, the elements of discord were actively at work below. The same broad distinctions of party still existed, but the opposition had formed new and dangerous combinations. Ardent aspirations for independence had, at first, borne down and overcome many deeply seated prejudices in the minds of the populace, which reasserted their sway, to a greater or less extent, when the object of these aspirations had been attained, and their enthusiasm become cooled. Such must always be the case when men are controlled more by impulse and feelings than by reason and reflection. The reactionary leaders were not slow to avail themselves of this circumstance, and succeeded in planting, in the minds of many of the people, the seeds of dissatisfaction with the very results which they themselves had aided to bring about.[1]

[1] The composition of the two parties, at this time, is well presented by an English author, to whose generally correct and impartial observations I have already frequently had occasion to allude.

"The Liberal party included some few who had been distinguished men under the monarchy, the greater portion of the legal and medical professions, or, in other words, the élite of the university, who had preferred those studies to that of theology or canons; not so much as a means of support, as because they were almost the only careers open to those who rejected the ecclesiastical vocation. It also numbered many merchants and landed proprietors, supported by a numerous body composed of the more intelligent artizans and laborers. Their leaders were men of very decided democratical principles, of unquestionable ability, and, considering the school they were brought up in, and the influences that surrounded

The Serviles consisted of heterogeneous classes, having nothing in common, except their hatred of the Liberals. The nucleus of this organization were the *soi-disant* nobility, the spawn of the vice-regal courts, whose tendencies, in common with those of the beneficed clergy, with whom they were associated, were "to oppose the education of the masses, to centralize and consolidate the civil power in the hands of the few,"—in short, to establish any order of things which should secure their own complete predominance. To this combination, the aristocrats, called "Sangres Azules," *blue bloods*, brought proficiency in intrigue, no insignificant degree of

them, they manifested no small amount of true patriotism and devotedness to their convictions; though, alas! in too many instances, stained with venality, and even with deeds of oppression and of blood. What they overthrew, and what they accomplished for the State, is honorable alike to their talents and to their sentiments; and though the limits of a sketch will scarcely admit of the due appreciation of it, a cursory view of their achievements, taking into consideration the circumstances of the people and of the times, will probably excite more wonder, and certainly secure for them higher praise, than the victories of Alvarado."—*Gospel in Central America*, p. 124.

"The Serviles, including the two extremes of society, the most refined and the most barbarous, linked together by their blind guides—the priests—were entirely led by the latter; among whom were many ignorant Spaniards, and some few men of ability, though, in this particular, they were far inferior to the Liberals. They, however, proved themselves to be thoroughly imbued with the spirit of their order and the genius of their system. They have ever acted upon the maxim that all things were lawful which seemed to them expedient; and, notwithstanding their apparent unity, they too had their divisions, their mutual jealousies, their private ambitions, and their individual immoralities; which, together with their common rapacity, were favorable to their opponents. And in general, if not universally, it will be found easy to trace to their intrigues the internal disorders of the social and political body, in each of the several states composing the republic; and not a few of the past civil wars, and existing animosities between State and State, are also attributable to their influence as a class, or to the personal ambition and seditious conduct of individuals in it."—*Ibid.* p. 126.

ability, considerable wealth, and the influences with which wealth is associated. The priesthood brought not only wealth, a widely extended machinery, capable of being rapidly and effectively wielded, but also, what was of more importance, numbers—adherents amongst the very people against whom they conspired, blind instruments of their will, whose concurrence was secured by traditional reverence for the Church, by deeply seated bigotry, and whose ignorance rendered them the easy victims of every artful appeal, especially when made by men to whom they were accustomed to look as leaders. Containing such elements, with an ignorant and excitable people, unacquainted with their duties, and without a clear knowledge of their prospective or immediate requirements, on the one hand, and a large and powerful faction, deadly hostile to every form of Republicanism, on the other, it was impossible for the Republic to remain in peace. In vain did the enlightened leaders of the liberal party labor to sustain public order. Their ancient foes sowed wide and deep the seeds of local discord, and by all possible means endeavored, but too successfully, to bring the Federal and State Governments in conflict.

In this they were greatly assisted by some radical defects in the Constitution itself; which, in common perhaps with our own charter, had not defined with sufficient exactness the respective powers of the State and General Governments. Upon this point the Liberals themselves were divided, some favoring a large centralization of power in the General Government, and others believing that the legitimate object of a federation is simply to effect what the States individually are incapable of accomplishing, and nothing more. These differences, it will be seen in the sequel, were not without their influence in weakening the Liberal strength, and precipitating the destruction of the Republic![1]

[1] There were also, some collateral questions started, which, if not directly, certainly indirectly, contributed to the same result. Upon every

With this necessary preliminary exposition, we proceed in our narration of events. From the first the Liberal cause was doomed to suffer from treachery. The Serviles had the social position and the wealth to tempt the ambition and purchase the concurrence, as well as the tact to flatter the vanity, of all those in position, who were open to such appeals. To propitiate, and imperceptibly to mould and direct, when they cannot crush, has been their uniform, and too often successful, policy. Gen. Arce, the President of the Republic, was the first victim of their arts. "Under the pretext of having secret information that the State authorities of Guatemala were plotting rebellion against the Federal Government, he was induced to arrest the citizen Chief or Governor of the State, José Francisco Barrundia, one of the most

subject of national policy which came up, the Serviles, very naturally, took such a course as should most effectually tend to distract and embarrass their opponents, without any regard to the principles of right or expediency which they might involve. The Constitution of the Republic, as we have already seen, not only liberated all the slaves in the country, but guarantied freedom to all who should enter its borders. It was not long before numbers of slaves from the British settlements at Belize fled within the territories of the Republic, and sought the protection of its laws. They were reclaimed, and their surrender peremptorily demanded, but by the Congress as peremptorily refused. The Serviles, in a body, advocated the surrender, and sided with the English in the proposed violation of the Constitution, and of the laws of humanity. From that moment the reactionists were favored, not only by the British merchants and political agents resident in the country, but also aided and abetted by the authorities at Belize, who undoubtedly reflected the disposition of the British cabinet. The Serviles, when they attained to power, surrendered the slaves, and have ever since been identified with the British interests and schemes—even to the extent of vindicating the British territorial aggressions on their sister States! This relationship, at this moment, keeps the Servile minority—a small numerical minority—in power in Guatemala, and controls the whole policy of that dictatorship, called, with severe irony, "The Republic of Guatemala."

able and active reformers in the country, while in the discharge of his official functions, in the House of the Government, and at once proceeded to disarm the civic militia." This outrage upon State sovereignty, to which no resistance was opposed, took place on the 6th of September, 1826, and from that period may be dated the terrible commotions to which the country was afterwards subjected. It was an arbitrary exercise of power, unwarranted by circumstances, in flagrant violation of the Constitution, and has consigned its perpetrators to eternal infamy.

The Serviles were not slow in following up their success. The citizen Cerilio Flores, a man high in public esteem, was Vice Chief, or Lieutenant Governor, of Guatemala. At the date of this event, he was in the district of Quesaltenango, engaged in the discharge of his official duties. The inhabitants of this district were chiefly Indians, ignorant, and under the unqualified control of the priests. When the news of the arrest of the Governor reached there, a friar ascended the pulpit, in the principal town, on a market-day, and by his harangue so infuriated the populace against Flores, that they started in pursuit of him, and although he sought sanctuary in the church, they followed him thither, and slaughtered him at the very foot of the altar, literally rending his body in pieces, amidst cries of "Long live Guatemala! Death to the Republic!" The proximate cause of the vindictive hostility of the monks, was the fact that, in the general levy of taxes for state purposes, the property of the convents had not been exempted! And thus was the movement, started by the aristocrats, seconded by their allies, the priests!

The violence exercised against the principal civil officers of Guatemala, was continued against all the inferior members of the Government, many of whom were imprisoned or assassinated, and the remainder compelled to seek safety in flight. The Liberals, taken by surprise, were at first unable to offer any resistance to these outrages. A number, never-

theless, hastily got together, and under the lead of Col. Pierson, a West Indian Creole, reduced the murderers of Flores in Quesaltenango; but, before they were able to unite their forces, for the rescue of Guatemala, were themselves attacked and dispersed, by troops ordered against them by the treacherous Arce. Under these auspices a new State Government was organized, consisting, it is needless to say, exclusively of the Serviles, and those in their interest. Don Mariano Aycinena, who had borne the title of Marquis under Spain, was made nominally chief, but practically dictator; and with his administration, came in that detestable system of political espionage and proscription, which has given such a bloody and barbarous cast to the political revolutions of the country. A political inquisition was established, for summarily disposing of all persons guilty of entertaining opinions differing from those of the usurpers! Its sessions were secret, and its decrees fell upon the astonished public with fearful rapidity. Men were condemned without hearing. To entertain liberal opinions, and possess ability, were enough to bring them under the ban of proscription, and consign them to prison and to death. The Liberal leaders were all outlawed, and Col. Pierson, one of the ablest of that party, who had returned to Guatemala, under promises of protection, was treacherously shot, beneath the walls of the cemetery! Terrorism and Servilism went hand in hand.[1]

Arce followed up his treason to the Republic, by convoking, on his own authority, a meeting of the General Congress; but the events which we have related caused so general and profound an excitement, that no meeting took place. The acknowledged object of this convocation, was to annul the Constitution, and organize a central authority, or dictatorship,

[1] Aycinena affected the utmost piety, and previous to signing the warrant of execution against Pierson, confessed himself and took the sacrament. Fit preparation for an act of treachery and murder!

which should at once blot out State independence. This was always a favorite project with the Servile party; which, throughout the country, emboldened by the successes of their friends in Guatemala, now created disturbances in Honduras and Nicaragua, and involved those states in civil war. San Salvador, true to the Republic, presented an undivided front. It repudiated the authority of Arce; and, in the heat of the moment, an insufficient detachment of troops marched upon the usurpers in Guatemala. They were met by such of the Federal troops as adhered to the President, and a body of Servile soldiery, and driven back. Being in turn attacked, they repulsed their enemies in the most decisive manner, and fully sustained the position of the State. Close upon these events, Arce endeavored to pursue in Honduras the same policy of subverting the State Government, which had been so easily effected in Guatemala, but failed in the attempt. He was repelled: and, having partially suppressed the Servile insurrections within its own limits, Honduras now united its forces with those of San Salvador. Nicaragua did the same. The detail of the insurrectionary struggles in the States, would be neither interesting nor profitable. Enough to say that they were bloody, and marked by those cruel and unrelenting features which distinguish civil wars above all others, and make them most to be dreaded.

The month of September, 1827, found the nominal head of the Republic wielding the forms of government, but sustained only by a portion of the Federal soldiery, and the Serviles of Guatemala; who, through terrorism, now held uncontrolled sway in that city, and of whom, in fact, Arce was himself only the instrument. The support which he and his Servile friends received in the other states, consisted only of local insurrections against the state authorities, undertaken without concert, and unproductive of any permanent impression. Upon the other hand, San Salvador unanimously, and Nicaragua and Honduras by large majorities,

were in open opposition to the men who had betrayed and subverted the Republic, and yet affected to be its representatives, but who were in reality only the masks of Servilism, and used to give a semblance of legality to treason. Costa Rica, separated by mountain wastes from the rest of the Confederacy, and insignificent in power, remained a passive and astonished spectator of these proceedings, without taking any part in the quarrel.

Between these two grand divisions, or parties, a desperate struggle now ensued; a struggle which was really but a prolongation of that which immediately succeeded the independence, for the same objects, but in which the Serviles had succeeded in introducing some new elements favorable to their views. Upon the 28th of September, the so-called Federal Army defeated the united forces of San Salvador and Honduras, at a place called Sabina Grande. But their triumph was brief. They were shortly after attacked in turn by a body of men from San Salvador and Nicaragua, and totally routed.

This battle was the most important, in many respects, of any which had been fought in the country. Not in the immediate results of the victory to the Liberals, but because it brought forward a man, henceforth not only to become the beloved leader of the Liberal party, but the most conspicuous man of the country. That man was Francisco Morazan, to whose energy and skill, although a subordinate officer, that victory was mainly ascribed, and no doubt justly due. His appearance in public life put an entirely new aspect upon the face of affairs, and for a while restored the Republic, and revived the hopes of the friends of freedom.

CHAPTER IV.

FRANCISCO MORAZAN, THE BULWARK OF THE REPUBLIC—OVERTHROW OF THE SERVILES—LIBERAL REFORMS—PROSTRATION OF THE CHURCH—ELEMENTS OF WEAKNESS. 1828—1830.

FRANCISCO MORAZAN, destined to stand in history as, in many respects the best, and in all the ablest man which Central America has yet produced, was born in Honduras in 1799. His father was a Creole from one of the French West India islands, and his mother a lady of the city of Tegucigalpa in Honduras. His education, so far as it was attained in schools, was neither better nor more extensive than that of others in the same condition in life; but he early evinced a quickness of apprehension and a thirst for knowledge, which soon placed him, in this respect, considerably in advance of his countrymen. He was also early distinguished for impetuosity of temper, associated with the greatest decision and perseverance of character, which, coupled with a free and manly bearing, and a frank and open manner, not only secured for him the love and respect of men, but qualified him to move and govern them. In 1824, he had risen to be Secretary General of Honduras, and subsequently Chief or Governor of the State. Naturally of a military turn, he was not entirely content with civil position, and turned his attention successfully to martial affairs. He led the Liberal troops of Nicaragua in the battle to which we have referred, on which turned his future career, and for a time the destinies of the entire country.

A series of sanguinary contests followed the affair of Sabina Grande, with varying success, but in which the Liberals fully held their own. On the 17th of December a fierce engagement took place at Santa Ana, in San Salvador, which, after severe loss on both sides, was terminated by a convention, providing that both armies should retire from the town. Cascaras, the Servile General, with the characteristic bad faith of his party, waited until the Liberals had fulfilled their part of the agreement, and then took possession of the city. This fraud was heralded as a triumph. The Serviles augmented their forces, and now boldly advanced into San Salvador, with the avowed object of reducing it to their control. Arce, depositing the office which he still continued nominally to hold, in the hands of the Vice-President, Beltranena, joined the invading column. The opposing armies met, not far from the city of San Salvador, and after a prolonged contest, the Liberals, under the command of Col. Merino, being much inferior in numbers, were defeated with great loss—the victors giving no quarter, and mercilessly slaughtering the wounded. The whole affair better deserves the name of a massacre, than a battle. These proceedings, as a matter of course, led to retaliations when the opportunity offered; and thus it was, that Servilism still further contributed to give to war, in Central America, those barbarous features which have since so often horrified all civilized nations.

The victors laid immediate siege to the city of San Salvador, but were repulsed. Operations were, nevertheless, continued; city after city fell into their hands; and in the month of June, 1828, it appeared as if the entire State was subdued. A convention was signed by the State Government, agreeing that San Salvador should be occupied by the invading forces, and that Arce should call a Congress in the town of Santa Ana. Of course it was not expected that this would be a constitutional Congress, or an independent body, but merely

a set of instruments ready to register blindly the decrees of Arce and the Servile leaders in Guatemala.

The news of this agreement or surrender, so outraged the sentiments of the people of the city of San Salvador, that they simultaneously rose in arms, made prisoners of the Federal troops garrisoning the city, deposed the Government, and organized provisional authorities in their place, by whom the war was renewed with augmented fury. This popular demonstration was promptly seconded by Gen. Morazan, at the head of the Liberal army of Honduras, who had just succeeded in putting down the reactionary movements in that State. He utterly defeated the invaders in his first encounter with them, and, following up his successes with unparalleled vigor, in less than two months captured or completely dispersed them. Arce fled to Guatemala, and endeavored to resume his nominal authority; but the Vice-President refused to surrender it, and the popular tide setting against both him and his Servile adherents, he found himself no longer safe, even in Guatemala, and made a precipitate flight into Mexico—whence, it will shortly be seen, he subsequently endeavored to invade the country of which he had been the chief magistrate.

Morazan having completely restored the Liberals to power, in San Salvador, now advanced upon the Serviles in Guatemala. Their army destroyed, their revenues exhausted, and incapable of resistance, they sought to evade their impending fate by pursuing a temporizing policy. They proposed at first an armistice, and then made overtures of peace; but meantime the people in Quesaltenango repudiated their authority, and the department became involved in a civil war of the bloodiest character. The Antigua, or city of old Guatemala, also rose in arms and pronounced against the Servile Government. To crown their distress, Morazan, at the head of 2000 Honduras and Salvador troops, now marched into their territories. After several contests, in which he

was generally successful, on the 15th of March, 1829, he appeared before the city and demanded its surrender. The Serviles in despair again sought to temporize and gain time. They proposed a treaty, offering to recall all the Liberals whom they had exiled, and even to share the government with them, and to restore the former order of things. Morazan, convinced of their insincerity, after listening to their propositions, cut short all discussion by assaulting the city, which he soon carried at the point of the bayonet. To his honor be it said, notwithstanding that the outrages of the Serviles were still recent, and the blood of the Liberals they had slaughtered was scarcely dry, both life and property were respected.

The Servile authority was at once superseded, all the exiles recalled, and the survivors of the former government again established in the places which they had filled, at the time of the Servile insurrection. The Federal Congress, dissolved in 1826, was also assembled, and provisionally organized by Nicholas Espinoza, Senior Senator, as President. Its first act was to decree extraordinary honors to Gen. Morazan; his portrait was ordered to be hung in the Representative Hall, and a gold medal to be struck in commemoration of the reëstablishment of the Republic.

The Congress next proceeded to the election of President in place of the absconding Arce. The choice fell upon José Francisco Barrudia, who, as we have seen, was Governor of Guatemala, at the time of the treason of Arce, by whom he had been seized and imprisoned. It next proceeded to declare all laws enacted and proceedings adopted under Arce's authority, from the 6th of April, 1826, to the 12th of April, 1829, unauthorized and illegal, and the government which had existed during that period, a usurpation. This done, it applied itself to the regulation of the affairs of the country, which three years of anarchy had plunged into the direst confusion.

Thus passed the Republic through its second trial; its second terrible baptism of blood, unfortunately not the last! The scattered Liberals now returned to their homes. Many, during their exile, had visited the United States and Europe, and now came back with new and enlarged ideas upon all subjects connected with government, and with much practical information, which they were prepared to devote to the good of the country, and the cause for which they had suffered so much.

It will not be useless to revert here, for a single moment, to the condition of affairs in Guatemala during the period of Servile ascendancy. While in the possession of power, the leaders of that faction did not direct their efforts exclusively to the proscription of the patriots, or the extension of their control over the remaining States of the confederacy. They were, in other respects, true to their instincts and antecedents. No sooner had they intrenched themselves in station—the old noblesse or aristocracy, as a matter of course filling the executive offices—than the church required the fulfillment of the terms of the reactionary coalition. But the aristocrats, flushed with success, with characteristic bad faith, slighted their associates in the national treason, and consented only to the partial restoration of the prerogatives which the Liberals had swept away. The contest with San Salvador and the other States had created great excitement, unfavorable to the exercise of priestly influence on the popular mind; and had also called into the field considerable armies, which were also under the control of the secular arm of the coalition. The adherents of the Church, whatever their feelings of disappointment and chagrin, found it politic to submit to what they could not remedy, and to put up with a part of what they required and had a right to expect, rather than break openly with their treacherous friends. They had the wisdom to bide their time, and held themselves in readiness to make the most of coming events. When, therefore, the Servile

armies met with reverses, and the aristocratic leaders began to lose the material elements of their power, and to grasp at every means of restoring and strengthening it, they made unconditional compliance with the direct and implied terms of the coalition, the price of their continued adherence to the declining fortunes of the aristocracy. The secular leaders, restrained by no considerations of principle, yielded to every demand, and signalized the last hours of their wretched sway, by a complete reversal of all the measures of equality and amelioration which had previously been adopted. With an insanity, which distinguishes factions from legitimate parties, they sought to deface and ruin what they could no longer control. Trembling on the verge of overthrow, they not only reversed the measures of the Liberals, but enacted the severest laws against religious dissent; decreed the burning of all books not authorized by the church; and took steps for the reëstablishment of the Inquisition. They had already, in defiance of the constitution and laws, surrendered the slaves demanded by the British at Belize, and by this, and other acts of subserviency, secured the support of the English authorities there and at home. They forbade all reunions for whatsoever purpose, established a rigid censorship of the press, a body of paid spies—in short, organized a military despotism. These acts were of course annulled, upon the triumph of Morazan, but were again put in force by the Servile party upon its accession to power in Guatemala, in 1841, and are still in existence—monuments of a barbarous age, and of the tyranny which, in that unfortunate State, disgraces the name of a Republic.

A Central American writer has sketched, with great truth and rhetorical vigor, the rise of Morazan, and the measures which followed the reëstablishment of the Republic.

"At this time appeared a man, raised up by Heaven as the Savior of his Country. Liberty girded him with her sword, and placed him at the head of the civil body. He knew the

men, the people, and the revolution. He appeared inspired for the country and for glory; opposition disappeared before him; he advanced from victory to victory, and bearing aloft the Constitution, entered the capital with it in his hands.[1] He again established the fundamental law, and gathered together the scattered authorities. Not a drop of blood was shed except on the field of battle. The Serviles disappeared from the public scene. The shackled press was liberated, and opened to every publication not obnoxious to common decency. In short, order, the Constitution, and the Republic reappeared. The patriotism, the valor, the intellect of one man had worked the change, and that man was Morazan!

"What, in this epoch, and in the quiet which followed their triumph, was the conduct of the Liberals? Not only was the enlightened policy of the Republic revived, and its previously established institutions again put into operation, but new measures of amelioration and popular good adopted. Although perfectly conscious that the reactionary faction was engaged in conspiracies, yet confiding in the popular honesty, no systems of espionage were encouraged. The utmost differences of opinion, and the widest latitude in expressing them, by word or pen, were permitted. Entire religious toleration was proclaimed, and equal protection to all forms of worship. The right of suffrage was extended to all adult males, whatever their color or condition. Individual rights received the most earnest guaranties, including the establishment of the principle of presumptive innocence in all cases of criminal accusations, *habeas corpus*, and trial by jury. The penal code was reformed, and made most equable. Public education also received the utmost attention; a well-organized system of instruction, capable of the widest expansion, was devised, under which schools, endowed and

[1] This is a literal fact; a copy of the Constitution was carried, with the flag of the Republic, at the head of the army.

free to all, speedily sprung up, and brought forward a class of youths, better instructed and better disciplined than any which had preceded them. Nor were the means of material progress neglected. Roads and other works of public utility were projected and undertaken; a survey of the Isthmus of Nicaragua authorized and executed; and a contract for the opening of an interoceanic ship canal was signed, on favorable terms, with the king of the Netherlands."

But while engaged in these beneficent works of reform and improvement, the government could not be wholly deaf to the popular demand for a vindication of the outraged constitution and laws, in the punishment of the men who had overthrown the Republic. In conformity with the general sentiment, on the 22d of August, 1829, the Federal Congress passed an act of banishment against the refugee Arce, and the officers which had adhered to him; as also against the late dictator of Guatemala, and those who had been associated with him in his administration. It also required that these men should return to the treasury the amount which they had appropriated on account of their salaries, and surrender a third part of their property to repair the damages which they had occasioned, and also refund the subsidies which they had exacted during the war. However demanded by strict justice, this latter step was no doubt impolitic, as giving the color of precedent to a system of confiscation, which, in the subsequent disturbances, was practiced, to a greater or less extent, by all parties. Legal proceedings were also instituted against the murderers of Flores and his fellow victims, in Quesaltenango; but as they involved a large number of persons, they were not pushed to their final issue.

While conceding thus much to the popular demand for justice, the Liberals nevertheless pursued the most kindly and conciliatory conduct towards the great body of their opponents. Such as were possessed of ability, and thought to

have a general patriotic disposition, were freely called to fill offices of trust and responsibility. No obstacles were interposed to prevent all who chose to do so, from rallying around the standard of their country. If this line of conduct, this excessive liberality, was not a theoretical, it was certainly, as will be seen in the sequel, under all the circumstances, a practical, error. The Serviles generally were incapable of appreciating the generosity with which they were treated, and accepted positions without relinquishing their original purposes.

Contemporaneously with these events a blow was struck at the Church, from which it has not, and can never recover. Overestimating the popular bigotry, and undaunted by the overthrow of the party with which they were allied, the priesthood commenced anew to plot against the Republic. They well comprehended that their influence and power must decline, as the principles of the Liberals became diffused, and the Republic itself consolidated. But their intrigues, incited by the archbishop, Ramon Casaus, in person, did not escape the vigilance of Morazan. Invested with plenary power for contingencies like this, and understanding fully the impossibility of reconciling the principles of the Church with those of the Republic, Mozaran perfected his arrangements for an effective blow, which fell on the night of the 11th of July, when the archbishop, and all the heads of the Dominican, Franciscan, Capuchin, and other monkish orders, were simultaneously seized, and escorted by soldiers to the port of Isabal, and thence shipped abroad. The remaining members of these orders were also summarily ordered to leave the country. This decisive step was followed by the suppression of all the convents by the State Government of Guatemala, and the appropriation of their property to purposes of education, and the use of the public charitable institutions. "The convent of the Dominicans was made a model prison, on the plan of those of the United States; another

was appropriated to the Lancasterian Normal School; a third became a public hospital, and the remainder were consecrated to other useful purposes. The nunneries were thrown open, and the inmates allowed to go where they pleased; but all females were thenceforth forbidden to take the veil." The Federal Congress, on the 7th of September following, not only ratified this act, but abolished all religious orders throughout the Republic. This action was speedily confirmed by all the States. It also declared the archbishop a traitor, confiscated his property, and banished him forever from the country, to which he never returned. Other measures of like tendency, including the prohibition of Papal bulls, followed in rapid succession; and finally, in 1832, the laws recognizing the Catholic creed as the faith of the country were abrogated, and not only tolerance to all creeds and forms of worship proclaimed, but entire religious freedom unconditionally decreed, and ratified by the several States. Subsequently the Serviles endeavored to reverse all these enlightened measures, and in Guatemala actually went through the form of their repeal; but it is contended that, emanating from the Republic, and adopted by the States, they cannot be affected by any local legislation, and still remain the supreme law of the land. The effect of these measures upon the popular mind, and the present position of the Church, I have attempted to indicate in another place. [1]

On the first of April of this year, the State of Costa Rica, by her geographical position separated from the rest of the Republic, embarrassed by the anomalous position of public affairs,—the confederation for the time being practically dissolved,—and desirous of avoiding collisions in which, from numerical weakness, she could not interfere with any effect, peaceably declared her separate independence, and, adopting the policy of strict neutrality, kept quietly on her course. When the Republic was again established, in January, 1831,

[1] See Narrative, chap. xxx.

she resumed her former relations, as one of the States of the Confederacy. She thus escaped all participation in the troubles which followed the insurrection of the Serviles. The tacit admission of the right of State secession, involved in this unopposed act, although the result of circumstances, and not of deliberation, had nevertheless a disastrous influence upon the permanence of the Confederacy. The respective powers of the State and General Governments, as we have already said, were not clearly defined at the outset, and when they afterwards became subjects of discussion, this precedent came in to overrule an impartial decision upon them.

The close of this year, as a whole fraught with results so favorable to the Liberal cause, and satisfactory to the friends of Republican institutions, was not wholly unobscured by clouds of evil portent. The revenues of Honduras were found inadequate to the support of the State Government, however economically administered. The State had also incurred considerable debts in its efforts to restore the Republic, and demands were made upon it which it could not meet. Under these circumstances, the State Legislature decreed a property tax, which, though trifling, was nevertheless universally resisted. It could not be collected. Similar attempts were made in San Salvador and Guatemala, with precisely the same results. Among the causes which most powerfully influenced the populace in behalf of independence, was the relief which it promised from the exactions which they had so long endured from Spain. This relief had been experienced under the first epoch of the Republic, and before the Serviles had distracted the country and crippled and destroyed its resources. Starting unembarrassed, had it not been for these men, it would have continued so — free from debt, and with a surplus revenue to be devoted to the public good. And it was not among the least of the evils which that faction entailed upon the country,—a canker at its vitals,—an exhausted treasury and inadequate revenues. The necessity

of taxation, incomprehensible to the ignorant, weaned them from their attachment to the cause for which they had before been enthusiastic, and from friends to the Republic, converted them, if not into open enemies, into discontented citizens. It operated more effectually than Servile intrigue, to bring about the overthrow of the confederacy. The government, from the consideration of measures for the public good, was absorbed in devising means to keep up the public credit; its resources crippled, it was unable to carry into effect the improvements which were imperiously demanded by the condition of the country; the construction of roads was suspended, and the public schools, without adequate support, became languishing. In the hope of better days, the desperate resort of a loan was adopted. Money, at ruinous rates, was procured from England, and with it, more fatal to the peace, prosperity, and integrity of the country than any other adverse circumstance, came the extension of British influence, and pretexts for British interference in the domestic and general relations of the States,—disputes, blockades, and territorial aggressions,—a black catalogue of unwarranted exactions, and a general policy justly liable to be stigmatized as piratical.

These opposing conditions must not be overlooked in the recital of events which followed. They will serve to break the force of the censure which might otherwise be cast upon the Liberal leaders, and explain what otherwise could only be regarded as the results of political blindness, and moral obliquity, not to say folly and corruption.

CHAPTER V.

BRITISH INTERFERENCE—NEW ELEMENTS OF DISCORD—SECESSION—THE LIBERALS DIVIDED AMONGST THEMSELVES—GLOOMY PROSPECTS FOR THE REPUBLIC. 1830—1836.

THE year 1830 found the Republic in peace, the Liberal party in undisturbed ascendancy, and devoting its energies to the promotion of the general prosperity. A treaty had been negotiated with the United States, and a Chargé d' Affaires from that Republic now resided in the country. England, although she had recognized the independence of Central America, and accredited public agents to its government, had as yet entered into no treaty relations with it; she now, however, proposed the negotiation of a treaty of amity and commerce, which proposition the Liberal Government, notwithstanding the irritation caused, some years before, by the peremptory and unauthorized demand for the surrender of the runaway slaves from Belize, was disposed to meet. But one obstacle interposed, and its real magnitude was apparent to Morazan. This was the retention of an indefinite extent of country around the mahogany establishment of Belize, by the British authorities, whose only claim to a foothold of any kind was a treaty with Spain, permitting English subjects to cut woods within certain limits, but with the express reservation of the sovereign territorial rights of the Spanish crown, and with an equally distinct preclusion from making any permanent establishments. This territory constituted part of the kingdom of Guatemala, and, with the overthrow of the royal

authority, accrued of right to the new Republic, with whom it was the duty of England to treat for the prolongation of the privileges conceded by Spain. But instead of doing so, the British Government availed itself of the circumstance to arbitrarily extend the limits of her *quasi* colony, without, in any manner, recognizing the Republican authorities, and in flagrant disregard of international law. This had not been overlooked by the Liberals in their first period of power; but before they were able to determine on a line of policy the Serviles secured ascendancy. Falling naturally into the English interest, they practically acquiesced in the usurpation. Now, however, when England proposed a treaty, the Government, under the advice of Morazan, acceded to the proposal, with the single proviso that its very first article should define both the limits and the time, within which England should be permitted to exercise the privileges it had previously enjoyed, under permission from the Spanish crown. Having already determined upon the unconditional retention of Belize, and looking greedily forward to territorial extension on the coast, the British Government was completely astounded by the decision of the Republic, upon whose weakness it had predicated all of its ambitious designs. Rightly regarding Morazan as the man who principally sustained the Government in this line of policy, the British agents in the country, and the authorities of the adjacent British dependencies, thenceforward made him the personal object of their hostility. They plotted with the Serviles against his authority, openly furnished arms to discontented factions, and when he subsequently came to the head of affairs, in all ways opposed and embarrassed his administration. Their hatred in the end became inflamed to such a degree, as to blind them to all considerations of duty, and betrayed them into the commission of acts revolting alike to decency and to humanity. For, incredible as it may seem, it was a British Consul-General, who, when the accomplished wife

of the absent President, flying from a brutal soldiery, sought the protection of his flag, not only refused her an asylum, but repulsed her,—a woman, a mother, unfriended, and alone,—rudely repulsed her from his door!

As soon as the position of the Republic in respect to the territory of Belize became known at that place, the British authorities assumed an arrogant and offensive tone towards the Republic. As a practical illustration of their contempt for its power, in a spirit of petty malice and revenge, they made a descent upon the large and fertile island of Roatan, on the coast of Honduras, and belonging to that State. They forcibly expelled the local authorities, and took possession of the island. The Federal Government made a formal complaint against this act of piracy, and it was disavowed by the British Cabinet. Yet the island has recently been seized again, by the same unscrupulous hands, and the former violence adduced by the British Government itself, as a proof of territorial right! At this time, and for similar reasons, pretensions were set up on the Mosquito shore,—pretensions originating in frauds, and urged in a spirit and by acts worthy only of the outlaws and pirates who established and gave a name to Belize.

The two years which followed the restoration of the Republic, as we have said, in spite of every obstacle, witnessed considerable advances, industrial and commercial, legislative and educational. Two new universities were established, one in San Salvador, another in Leon. The culture of cochineal was introduced, with great profit, into Guatemala; and that of coffee, with equal advantage, into Costa Rica. The culture of other staples was revived and extended in the remaining States. That of Indigo, which in San Salvador had fallen to not more than 3000, now rose to upwards of 7,000 bales annually.

But it is not to be supposed that the Serviles were idle during this period, or had accommodated themselves to the

existing order of things. They were silently but actively engaged in plots against the Government, in which those placed in position, by the mistaken generosity of the Liberals, were most conspicuous. Favors undeservedly conferred, never fail to secure the deadliest hostility of the recipient. At the close of 1831 the treason was ripe. Arce, the exiled President, invaded the Altos at the head of a hireling force from Mexico; Dominguez, a Servile officer, who had professed to be reconciled with the Republic, and had received a military command, headed a simultaneous insurrection in Honduras, where he was seconded by Ramon Guzman, governor of the Castle of Omoa. Arce, however, was met and routed, and Dominguez captured and shot. Guzman, at Omoa, finding himself without support, and relying upon the strength of the fort which he commanded, to enable him to hold out, raised the flag of Spain, and sent to Cuba for relief. Meantime, however, the fortress was besieged and taken by the Federal troops, and the Spanish flag, tied to the tail of a mule, was dragged through the streets of the town. In Nicaragua, also, whether by concert with the Serviles or otherwise is not known, the emissaries of Spain succeeded in creating some disturbances, but they were speedily suppressed.

This easy overthrow of the Serviles inspired the Liberals with great contempt for the power of that faction, and by removing all apparent danger from that source, destroyed one effective bond of union amongst those devoted to liberal ideas. It is always unsafe to undervalue opposition; and it was the more so, in this instance, from the circumstance that wide differences of opinion prevailed amongst the Liberals, in respect to certain great measures of policy. These differences, in the presence of common danger, had been sacrificed to the common good. But now they came conspicuously forward; and as collision, however slight, always

generates feelings, and often begets hostility, the hitherto undivided Liberals became separated into two parties, between whom the breach widened day by day. The grounds of difference, originating at the time of the adoption of the Constitution, I have already briefly indicated. Some favored a strong General Government, which should be as clear a representation of nationality as a monarchy itself, while others contended for the principle of State sovereignty, and a Federal Government which should confine its functions to the management of foreign relations, and the maintenance of harmonious intercourse between the States. These parties were called, respectively, Centralists, and Federalists,—designations, which, for a time, displaced those of Serviles and Liberals. Under the disguise of these names, the Serviles often exerted themselves to effect what they could not openly achieve.

The practical results of these differences, and the vagueness of the Constitution upon the points at issue, were disastrous. The State of San Salvador—devoted to the Republic, but jealous of its own prerogatives, and entertaining a strong feeling of rivalry towards Guatemala, which the general Servile tendencies of that State had converted into a feeling bordering on hostility, and believing the President more devoted to its interests than those of the nation,—in a moment of excitement, rashly vindicated its notions of State Rights, by seceding from the Confederation. Instead of permitting the State time to reflect on her folly, and to return quietly within the bosom of the nation, against, it is believed, the better judgment of Morazan, measures of coercion were resorted to, successfully for the moment, but most unfortunately in the end. For the first time Liberals were arrayed against Liberals, and the animosity of blood was begotten. With ill-suppressed exultation, the Serviles lent themselves to fan the flames of discord, and widen the opening

breach. They sided with one party or the other, according to circumstances, and as it might augment their ability for evil.

Morazan, having, meantime, been elected President, now committed the capital error of assuming the Executive power in San Salvador, and the responsibility of filling its administrative offices. Whatever may have been the exigencies of the case, the act stands an absolute usurpation of power, incapable of justification. The most that can be said, by way of apology is that, Morazan's whole career absolves him from the suspicion of bad motives, and favors the belief, that he acted from a patrotic, but mistaken sense of expediency. As might have been anticipated, the States Rights parties of Honduras and Nicaragua, in consequence of these irregularities, pointing to the former unrebuked action of Costa Rica, also decreed their separation. Costa Rica again did the same. The Federal Government saw its error, and instead of at once retracing its steps, stood surprised and irresolute. San Salvador, availing itself of this irresolution, again declared its separation, and the Republic suddenly presented the spectacle of total disruption. But this was more in appearance than in reality; for the acts of separation were, after all, only conditional. The States regarded them as measures necessary to procure a better understanding of the true relations of state and nation; and not as a repudiation of the principle of confederation, to which they still adhered. But they did not perceive or comprehend that every violence of this kind weakened the popular attachment to that principle, and established precedents for every subsequent insubordination. A people familiarized to blood becomes cruel; a frequent appeal to measures of final resort unhinges all systems of government, and opens wide the gates of anarchy. Secession, for purposes of coercion, degenerated into a measure of expediency, resorted to on any occasion, and on the paltriest

of pretexts; it sapped the foundations of the Republic, and finally overthrew it.

Ruin seemed impending over the country; the Serviles were exultant, and again began to display a threatening front. The Liberals, suddenly roused to a sense of their danger, paused in their career of madness, and began to retrace their steps. The States relinquished their antagonistic positions, and resumed their place in the Confederacy, and the Federal Government issued writs for the election of a new Congress, which should adjust all differences. But a new element of discord now appeared, to collect again the dispersing gloom. Some of the smaller States, jealous of Guatemala, which was greatly superior in extent and population to any other, and consequently possessed of greater influence in the National Congress, demanded that the States should have an equal voice in that body. This was a vagary which had sprung up during the States Rights agitation, and its recognition was demanded as a peremptory condition of proceeding with the elections. The Republican leaders, whose eyes were now fully opened to the perils which surrounded them, and capable of any sacrifices, finally induced Guatemala to assent to this unwarrantable requisition. But though some of the States proceeded with their elections, yet it was so generally obvious, that no such compromise, or rather sacrifice of rights, could be satisfactory or permanent, that the matter dropped, or was superseded by subsequent events; so that the proposed Congress never met. All compromises involving any surrender of principle (and almost all of necessity do) are wrong, and whatever their immediate result, invariably productive of greater evil in the end than they are designed to remedy.

Other measures were now advanced for securing a good understanding amongst the States, and harmony with the Federal Government. A revision of the Constitution was

proposed, and commissioners were named to prepare a project to be submitted to the country. To obviate the jealousy entertained of Guatemala, the seat of the Federal Government was transferred to the city of San Salvador; and, in imitation of the United States, an area extending ten leagues around the city was erected into a Federal District. But while this removed the Government further from the centre of Servile influence, and thus far conciliated the remaining States, it alienated and embittered the people of Guatemala, whose feelings of resistance were further roused by the proposition, subsequently carried into effect, of dividing that State into two or three distinct sovereignties. The general effect of these measures, actual and proposed, was to produce present quiet. The final accommodation of all differences was tacitly intrusted to the future, and meantime affairs went on very nearly as they had done before the mania of secession had seized upon the country. Attention was again devoted to measures of general good. The act of Religious Emancipation, elsewhere referred to, was now adopted, and ecclesiastical tithes, before reduced one-half, were now entirely abolished. The penal code of Spain, with some modifications, had been continued, but was corrupt and unwieldy. The ex-President, Barrundia, devoted himself to its reform. He translated the enlightened code of one of our own countrymen, Chancellor Livingston, which, with slight changes, was substituted for that of Spain. He moved the establishment of trial by jury; and it was adopted first in San Salvador, and very soon afterwards in Nicaragua and Guatemala. But strange as it may appear, this measure, elsewhere regarded as essential to the popular security, here met with popular opposition. It was an innovation not comprehended by the people at large,—it fell gradually into disuse, and was finally abolished.

The spirit which animated the Liberals, at this time, may be partially inferred from the fact that the Federal Congress

decreed a general mourning for Jeremy Bentham, whose works were popular amongst the Liberal leaders.

Before proceeding further, it is necessary to refer to an event which, although not of great immediate importance, introduced another and most fearful element in the affairs of the country, and was the precursor of innumerable calamities. The decided proceedings against the principal officers of the Church, and against the beneficed clergy, had not directly affected the subordinate and rural priesthood. But when marriage was decreed to be a civil contract, requiring only the authorization of the secular authorities, and the fees derived therefrom were suspended, when tithes came to be abolished, the hostility of the priests was raised to its highest pitch. They found abundant pretexts for appealing to the popular prejudices, against the general policy of the government. The concessions made to foreigners, and especially the act of religious freedom, they asserted, were designed to encourage an influx of population from abroad, which should overwhelm and enslave the native inhabitants. They raised a concerted outcry against "los estrangeros," strangers, the echoes of which may yet be heard amongst the mountains of Guatemala. This outcry, of course, found but a slight response amongst the educated classes, or that portion of the population in which white blood predominated. But these did not, nor do they now constitute, the great mass of the people. The Indians, spread all over the country, in some wide districts and large towns forming the only inhabitants, were not insensible to these appeals. The hatred engendered by the Conquest still smouldered in their hearts, and it required but little to fan it into a flame. From the advent of the foreigner, they dated their prostration, and from an increase of his power, they imagined, new exactions and a further depression would follow. True to their universal character, they listened in silence to the inflammatory appeals of the priests; but that silence was only the calm which pre-

cedes the storm. A wide conspiracy amongst the aborigines was organized in San Salvador, which first betrayed itself in overt acts on the 24th of July, 1832, when an Indian named Anastacio Aquino, a native of the Indian pueblo of Santiago Nunualco, proclaimed an Indian government, and at the head of a body of his adherents, proceeded to attack the neighboring towns; putting to death indiscriminately, all foreigners, creoles, and meztizos. He was, however, soon overcome by the troops of the government, in an attack on San Vicente, and, with his followers, captured and shot. Conceiving that the conspiracy involved the entire Indian population, the Government at first resolved upon their general extermination, but better counsels prevailed, or the attempt was regarded as too hazardous; at any event, it was not undertaken.

The part assumed by the priests in these disturbances was punished by a suppression of all the *fiéstas* and saints' days of the ecclesiastical calendar, except Sunday and five holidays. The numerous *fiéstas* had long been regarded as serious interruptions of general industry. "This was, however, one of the measures against which the Serviles were enabled to avail themselves of the popular feeling, so as to direct it against the Liberals. The cry of heresy and profanity had long been raised against the acts of the latter, but it never told so effectually, even upon the most fanatical, as when their own pleasures, or rather their vices and excesses, were interfered with."

The year 1834, was signalized by further collisions between the State and Federal authorities in San Salvador, in which the latter were successful, and by some disturbances, resulting from personal ambition, in Nicaragua. Early in 1835, Costa Rica also, although containing less than 100,000 inhabitants, became involved in troubles, occasioned, it would seem, by the jealousy, existing between the old capital, Cartago, and the new capital, San José, but in which the former

availed itself of the pretext of extending the right of suffrage, limited by the Constitution to landholders, to secure the popular feeling in support of its designs. It is, nevertheless, alleged, by the native historians, that the priests here, as elsewhere, were the prime instigators of the movement; and there is too much reason to believe, that they were ready to avail themselves of any ground of excitement, to weaken and embarrass the ruling party in the State and Nation.

Early in 1835, the Federal Congress, having, meanwhile, removed its sittings to San Salvador, promulgated the new Constitution reported by the committee, to which the task of framing it had been delegated. It was based upon the instrument of 1824, with many liberal and equable modifications; but it encountered, as a matter of course, the undivided hostility of the Serviles, and the opposition of a considerable part of the Liberals, and was rejected by every State except Costa Rica. The respective States proposed different, and in most cases, irreconcilable reforms.

A period of suspense ensued; the Liberals were greatly embarrassed; and as no progress had been made towards the establishment of a settled government, the whole of the year 1836, in the language of a writer on that period, may be "compared to the intervals between the eruptions of the active volcanoes, which form so apt an emblem of the people of the country where they are situated." The Government was not, however, wholly inactive. It had early been convinced of the necessity of increasing the European element in the population of the country, and had adopted various measures, looking to that result. The Constituent Assembly had taken action upon the subject, and the Federal Congress had subsequently, not only removed every obstacle, religious and otherwise, but offered large encouragement to emigration. This year witnessed the first practical results of this policy. An extensive scheme of colonization was started in England, under the comprehensive name of "The Eastern Coast of

Central America Commercial and Agricultural Company." It was organized under the terms of a general grant, which provided that a certain extent of territory, and a variety of privileges should accrue to any company which might, within four years, colonize two hundred families, and within ten years, one thousand. The locality selected was Boca Nueva, Department of Vera Paz, State of Guatemala. The projected town was called Abbotsville, and the name is still to be found on the maps of that period. But the managers of the company were, for the most part, unprincipled speculators, and although a considerable number of individuals were sent out, and some $200,000 expended, the whole project fell through. The emigrants were of the worst class, and the circumstances of location and climate were fatal to the success of any scheme, however well devised or supported. Many died, others returned, or left for the West Indies, and a few penetrated into the interior. At the end of two years nothing remained of the attempted colony, except a small clearing, half occupied by graves, and a few decaying dwellings.

As observed by Mr. Dunlap, "It seems a most singular infatuation in Europeans, to attempt colonizing on pestiferous shores, under a burning sun, where no native of a temperate region, not even those of the interior of the same country, can enjoy tolerable health. Had they, instead, secured lands on the delightful banks of the Lake of Nicaragua, or on the table lands of Guatemala or Costa Rica, with a communication to the nearest port, the result might have been very different; but the failure of most colonies lately founded, no doubt arose from their being undertaken by people, strangers to the country and the climate where they were to be established; and it is to be hoped, that if such schemes are again undertaken, persons acquainted with the country will previously be consulted."

This attempt, on the part of British adventurers, to estab-

lish themselves in Central America, was characterized by a system of tactics, which seems inseparable from all British movements in that portion of the world, and which has led to the usurpation of Belize, the seizure of Roatan, and the extension of British dominion over the Mosquito shore. No sooner had this company effected a lodgment within the territories of Guatemala, than they sought to induce the British Government to extend its dominion over it, and make it another centre of assault upon the territories of the Republic. They represented themselves likely "to sustain for England *all that she has got, or can hope to get*" in those regions; and, in a memorial addressed to Lord Palmerston, dated October 28, 1835, this policy was supported, on the ground of affording a check upon the United States, and of "securing for Great Britain a position far more prominent" than that of any, and of all other nations in Central America! But although these tactics failed in this instance, they nevertheless deserve a passing exposure, for the benefit of those who, discrediting their own senses, profess to believe it impossible that the conduct of British subjects and agents, and of the British Government in Central America, has been counter to their plausible protestations upon the subject.

CHAPTER VI.

THE REIGN OF TERROR—WAR OF CASTES—RAFAEL CARRERA—DISSOLUTION OF THE REPUBLIC—OVERTHROW AND FLIGHT OF MORAZAN—ANARCHY. 1836—1841.

We are now approaching the most disastrous period of Central American history, the reign of anarchy and blood, when the worst elements of civil and social discord were let loose upon that devoted country. We have seen how Servilism, failing in its open assaults on the Republic, descended to every form of conspiracy and treason; how the strength and *prestige* of the General Government had been weakened and destroyed by bad precedent, and by mistaken policy towards the States; how the great Liberal party had not only become divided, but its members embittered against each other; how British influence had been arrayed against the actual government, and the liberal tendencies of the country; and how the power of the Church, although broken, was yet madly exerted to foment social disorders, and create a war of castes, more to be avoided than any other species of conflict amongst men, because it is necessarily a war of extermination. The Republic might have overcome all these opposing circumstances; survived all the shocks to which it was exposed; rooted out the elements of disease in the body politic, and triumphantly vindicated the glorious principles upon which it had been founded. But there was one source of weakness, a canker at the heart, which was more fatal to its

existence and success than priestly, or servile, or foreign, or whatever other distracting influences, or all combined, and that was POPULAR IGNORANCE! Fatally for the Republic, that mass of the population, whatever its desires or impulses, was sunk in ignorance.

Up to this time, the concurrence of the people generally, in the measures of amelioration and good government which were adopted, had been secured more by appeals to their feelings than to their judgment—a false and unstable reliance, which makes all government a thing of caprice, comparable only to a rudderless bark upon a turbulent sea. Relief from taxation and exactions of every kind was one of the controlling influences, with the people at large, in their overthrow of the Spanish authority. Incapable of comprehending the requirements of government, they ignorantly claimed exemption from contributing to its support. And when the reformed code was adopted, and prisons, from dark dens of death were required to be constructed on a new plan, they neither understood the necessity nor humanity of the change. They only considered that it drew from them money and labor, and therefore they opposed it. They regarded trial by jury, not as a measure of vital import, of security to life and property, but as an unwarrantable demand upon their time and services; and without confidence in each other, distrusted the impartiality of their fellows constituting the jury. Such were the considerations which controlled them; and in this manner did the most laudable acts of the Republic, artfully misrepresented by its enemies, contribute to its downfall.

When the Livingston code of laws was put in operation in Guatemala, the people of the town of San Juan Ostuncala, who were nearly all aborigines, being called upon to construct new prisons, rose *en masse* against the circuit judges, then holding their first term of court in that town, and compelled them to fly. A short time after a collision ensued be-

tween the populace, and the authorities, and troops of the district who endeavored to enforce the laws, in which, after a severe struggle the former were defeated. In their flight they left behind them some of their ancient stone idols, hitherto concealed from the priests, but which they had brought from their hiding places, in the belief that they would be able to assist them against their assailants. This circumstance furnishes an evidence alike of the popular ignorance and general superstition.

But the dire consequences of the general ignorance were not fully exemplified until the following year, when the cholera first made its appearance in Central America. Physicians were few, and from neglect and improper treatment the disease spread with fearful rapidity, and was attended with the greatest mortality. General consternation pervaded the entire population; never before had an epidemic swept over their country. The government, prompt to discharge its duties, took active measures to mitigate, if it could not stop the ravages of the pestilence. "Not only all the medical staff of Guatemala," says an English author, then resident in the country, "but most of the young students, were furnished with medicines and sent to those places where it was thought their presence was most urgently required. The poor Indians, who were dying in great numbers, are generally panic stricken when the least epidemic prevails. Their terror was now excessive. The priests, who had before learned to improve, even such opportunities, were ready to foment their fears, and to awaken their resentment against the Liberals, by insinuating that they had poisoned the waters with a view to destroy the Indians, intending to repeople the country with foreigners; and as a proof of this they pointed to the colony just established in Vera Paz. The too credulous aborigines, who had so lately been excited against some of the reforms, and especially that of trial by jury, needed no more to rouse them to rebellion. Their cry was now di-

rected against the poisoners and the foreign residents. Many of the doctors had to effect their escape as best they could. Some were seized and killed, being forced to swallow the whole contents of their medicine chests, or water was poured down their throats till they died, and the results were considered conclusive evidence of their guilt."

The insurrection became general in the districts in which the aboriginies predominated, and the desolation of the pestilence was soon followed by the more dreadful devastations of civil war. Irregular and tumultuous assemblages, avowing the bloodiest purposes, became common in places where, as yet, there had been no open revolt. An ill-advised attempt to disperse one of the largest of these, by a small body of troops, at the town of Santa Rosa, on the 9th of June, 1837, was successfully resisted; a part of the troops were killed, and the remainder forced to retreat with precipitation. The affair, in itself, was not of much consequence: like a thousand similar affrays, it might have caused a momentary excitement, and then have been forgotten. But, like the battle of Sabina Grande, which, by bringing forward Morazan, changed, for the time, the destinies of the country, and averted the fate which impended over it, the rout at Santa Rosa marks an era in the history of Central America—the era of anarchy and blood. The war of castes, of which the aboriginal insurrection in San Salvador had been but a precursor, now commenced in earnest. The leader of the mob at Santa Rosa was Rafael Carrera, whose name thenceforward became conspicuous in the annals of the country, and a synonym for all that was fearful to the people of Guatemala, over whom he soon come to sway the terrors of an irrepressible and despotic power.

Carrera's history forms a most striking contrast to that of Morazan. Both were born of revolutions; both came to exercise unlimited power; but there the parallel ends. One was the savior for the time, of Republican institutions—the

other their assassin; the liberality, the generosity, the patriotism of one, were not more conspicuous, than the ignorance, the bigotry, the treachery, and the brutality of the other. One was the impersonation of progress and freedom, the idol of a republican and lawfully constituted soldiery; the other of retrogradation and tyranny, and the blind leader of fanatic and tumultuous hordes animated by hate and lust, and eager for pillage, revenge and murder.

Carrera is a Ladino, or mixture of white and Indian, with a great predominance of the latter—a dark, uncommunicative, irrascible man, of a bold, unscrupulous spirit, and possessed of great determination and perseverance. When he led the mob at Santa Rosa, he was only about twenty-one years of age—a pig driver, unable either to read or write, but yet already possessed of considerable influence amongst the lower classes of the Indian population. His affinities of blood, and the force of circumstances, rather than his bravery or his abilities, were the elements of his strength and success, and ultimately raised him to power—a power never controlled by justice, or tempered with mercy.

Carrera was, at the first, a mere tool of the priests, and seems really to have believed the story which they artfully and industriously circulated, that the cholera was induced by a systematic poisoning of the waters by the government and the foreigners, and that, under pretext of checking the disease, the physicians, sent out by the authorities, were actually engaged in the prosecution of the design of exterminating the Indian and mixed population.

Inspirited by the success at Santa Rosa, and fixing upon Carrera as the instrument of their purposes, the priests willingly lent themselves to the extension of his influence. They proclaimed to the natives that he was their protecting angel Rafael, descended from heaven, to take vengeance on the heretics, Liberals, and foreigners, and to restore their ancient dominion. They devised various tricks to favor the

delusion, which were herabled as miracles. A letter was let down from the roof of one of the churches, in the midst of a vast congregation of Indians, which purported to come from the Virgin Mary, commissioning Carrera to lead in a general revolt against the government, and assuring him of the tangible interposition of Heaven!

Carrera, by these means, soon found himself at the head of a large body of excited, but undisciplined Indians. From fear or policy, he avoided any general engagement with the forces sent against him, and never suffered himself to be drawn into a conflict, except when the chances were greatly in his favor. The first encounter, after the affair of Santa Rosa, although the Indians fought with desperation, under the assurance of immediate entrance into paradise of all who fell, resulted in the defeat of the insurgents. Their obstinate resistance, however, had maddened the troops of the government, who, in the heat of the moment, committed great excesses, which tended to make subsequent reconciliation impossible. Their conduct gave color to the popular belief, that the complete annihilation of the Indians was meditated. The fight of Mataquescuintla, was, therefore, without any decisive effect. Carrera fled from place to place, but everywhere lighted the flames of insurrection, which now became universal. The energies of the government were exhausted, in vain attempts to bring matters to a final issue. Guerilla bands, and bodies of marauders and robbers infested all the public highways, and swept off the inhabitants of the undefended estates. In fact, out of the principal towns, and except in their immediate vicinity, the completest anarchy prevailed.

In Guatemala the questions which had before divided the people were, to a great degree, swallowed up in that of the public safety. The Liberal Government of the State found itself beset with difficulties and dangers on every side, and the Serviles themselves were affrighted at the storm which

they had contributed to raise, and which could no longer be controlled. In this emergency, the Liberals proposed a reconciliation or compromise, in order to avert the common danger. The Serviles required the resignation of the governor, Galvez, one of the most decided, yet most moderate and able of the Liberals, the dissolution of his ministry, and the induction of new officers to be selected from those neutral or moderate in politics. The Liberals, true to their name, acceded to the demands, and even allowed the establishment of a semi-Servile government, rather than incur the responsibility of still further endangering the State.

The new administration, under pretence of the necessity of these measures in restoring peace, suspended the law of *habeas corpus* and many other guaranties of the constitution, shackled the press, and established a military regimen; in short, betrayed the most decided reactionary tendencies. The excesses of the military, who were invested with extraordinary powers, also contributed to create general discontent; and although these measures, under the belief that they were in some degree required by the public exigencies, received a tacit support from one portion of the Liberals, yet the great body of that party regarded them with fear and hostility. Much irritation and some serious disputes speedily ensued. Antigua Guatemala, head of the department of Sacatepequez, always jealous of the new city, pronounced against the State Government,—denounced it as an usurpation, and placed itself under the protection of the Federation. The State Government retaliated by declaring Sacatepequez in a state of insurrection, and proclaimed martial law against it. But similar pronunciamentos soon followed in the Departments of Chiquimula, Salamar, and Vera Paz. A portion of the troops, also indignant at what they regarded the treachery of the acting government, rose in the capital itself, and demanded the restoration of the officers who had resigned to favor the so-called compromise.

In this confusion, the factions called in the sword of Carrera, who, with the aid of his ferocious guerillas, marched upon Guatemala, captured it, and placed a man named Velasquez at the head of the State. This excitement was followed by the greatest alarm, for Carrera's soldiery could not be restrained,—disorders of every kind, robberies and violence became of constant occurrence. The people demanded their expulsion, which was effected with difficulty,—the Serviles forcing the Liberals, who were temporarily associated with them, to take the lead in the movement, and incur the hatred of Carrera and his followers. They quietly remained in their houses, and even, it is said, conveyed secret assurances to Carrera that it was done in defiance of their wishes. A partial understanding had already been effected between them, and from thenceforth the Serviles were committed to Carrera and the insurrection.

The Liberals of the Departments of Quesaltenango, Solola, and Totonicapan, where the insurrection was not yet general, now erected those provinces into a new State, called Los Altos, and asked admission into the Federation. The application was favorably received; and soon after the new State was formally recognized, and admitted into the Federation in its sovereign capacity. Here the Liberals sought refuge from Guatemala, where the Serviles, installed by force, and leagued with the aborigines, enacted the most proscriptive measures against all who opposed their authority. Had they not met with a speedy check, it is impossible to say to what height their violence might have attained.

The Federal Government, at the commencement of the insurrection in Guatemala, had not attempted to interfere. It was doubted whether it had a right to do so until the authority of the State had failed to vindicate itself; nor had it the means, at the moment, of effective interposition. The people of the other States were not eager to interfere in quarrels in which they were not directly interested. When, therefore,

Morazan found himself forced by circumstances and the Constitution to interpose, he experienced great difficulty in raising the requisite forces. He was finally compelled to advance at the head of an insufficient number of men. He reached the district of Mita, the seat of the rebellion, and although victorious in every engagement, yet at the end of a severe campaign found, to his deep regret, that no decisive result had been achieved. The new posture of affairs in Guatemala now embarrassed him still further. The Servile policy was effectively adapted to keep up the war. At the head, therefore, of his harrassed army, he now turned his face towards that city. The Serviles knew the man, and overawed by his presence, attempted no opposition. To bend, they had long before learned, was wiser than to break. Their obvious policy was to temporize and evade,—a policy always coupled with deceit and treachery. The people, relieved by the approach of Morazan, demanded the resignation of the Servile authorities; and with a well-feigned patriotic compliance, they surrendered their offices into the hands of Morazan. A new election was shortly afterwards ordered, which resulted in the choice of Mariano Rivera Paz, a moderate Liberal, as Chief of the State. The first acts of the restored Liberals were to proclaim a general amnesty of all political offences committed since the Independence, and to make a general appeal to the inhabitants for the suppression of interior disorders. The immediate effect upon the insurgents was favorable, and Morazan again taking the field against them, they proposed terms which were accepted, and a treacherous peace was patched up, to be broken at the first favorable moment.

The presence of Morazan in the capital of Guatemala was signalized by an attempt to corrupt his patriotism, and bring him into the Servile interest. "This arrogant, and yet most subservient party," says a Central American author, "received Morazan with well-affected satisfaction; they surrounded him, and overwhelmed him with flattery and adulation, For the

moment, they reflected on him the disgrace which attached to themselves, and deceived with the belief that they had corrupted his principles, they finally openly proposed to him to abandon his supporters, abolish existing institutions, and assume the dictatorship of the country. Their proposition was met with the scorn which it deserved; and, covered with shame, the parricides were thrown back again upon their more congenial policy of intrigue and insurrection."

While these events were taking place in Guatemala, the other States were daily becoming more and more disorganized. The attempt to agree upon a new Constitution had failed, and the objections against the old one had undergone no diminution. Distrust and discontent were general; the seething of the popular elements was constantly going on, and occasionally breaking out in insurrectionary ebullitions. Morazan had no sooner restored a temporary calm in Guatemala, than he was called to suppress serious disorders in San Salvador. A man of unsurpassed daring and cruelty, Francisco Malespin, had excited a revolt which threatened disastrous consequences. The grounds upon which it was started are not known: indeed, parties had now become subdivided into numerous factions, without any clear conception of their own wants, and swayed by the impulses of the moment.

Hardly had Morazan passed out of Guatemala, followed by the Federal troops, before Carrera again concentrated his Indian followers, and assumed the offensive with renewed vigor. He attacked a body of government troops stationed, under the command of Col. Bonilla, at Xalapa, and not only routed them, but drove the fugitive remnants beyond the borders of the State, into San Salvador. This success inspired the insurgents with confidence, and increased their numbers. Carrera had not forgotten his ignominious expulsion from the city of Guatemala; and, burning for revenge, he directed all his energies to secure its overthrow. An attempt was made by a petty force, at Petapa, to stop his advance, but it

was unsuccessful, and he continued his march. Hardly had the news of the outbreak reached the city, before he appeared before it, and the day following he entered without resistance. The excited savage had sworn to burn the city to the ground, and was with great difficulty prevailed upon to forego his purpose. He nevertheless exercised the greatest cruelties upon the Liberal inhabitants, and his soldiers plundered them with impunity. The Serviles enjoyed entire immunity, and cemented firmly their alliance with the Indian leader.[1]

But in the midst of the intoxication of this triumph, Gen. Salazar, who had collected a force of nine hundred men, encountered a large body of the insurgents returning from the plunder of a neighboring town, at a place called Villa Nueva, and favored by circumstances, defeated them with terrible slaughter. More than five hundred of the Indians were slain. Carrera, affrighted at the disaster, at the head of his followers, abandoned the city, and fled to the fastnesses of Mitá. Had this effective blow been followed up, the insurrection would no doubt have been permanently crushed. But Salazar was embarrassed by other officers in the Servile in-

[1] Concerning the events following the capture, Don Jose Barrundia, a living author, writes as follows:

"Who can describe the agony of Guatemala beneath the fury of the savage, and the oppression of his hordes? It is fearful to recall the continued assaults on the houses, within which, through doors and windows, the roving soldiery wantonly discharged their arms, killing and wounding the unresisting occupants, without regard to age or sex. Insult and assassination were common in the public streets, in the broad light of day. What then were the horrors of the night, when the doleful songs of the savages, mingled with drunken shouts, the shrieks of violated women, and the groans of husbands, fathers and brothers, slaughtered in vain attempts at resistance, all combined to appal the souls of men?

"All this time, however, the Serviles enjoyed immunity, beneath the shadow of the monster. He received the homage of the noblesse; incense was offered to him in the temples, and in the great cathedral, he was impiously proclaimed as an angel sent of God!"

terest, who were now prolific in temporizing plans, and compelled him to proceed to Guatemala, where he threw up his commission in disgust. And although he was afterwards induced to resume it, yet meantime the insurgents had recovered from their alarm. The indomitable Carrera again appeared in the field, and made an incursion into San Salvador, reduced the towns of Santa Ana and Aquachahan, and then rapidly fell back within the State of Guatemala. Here, however, he was met once more, and again defeated. A series of contests ensued, with results generally unfavorable to the insurgents, who, learning that Morazan was organizing a force for their complete annihilation, became dispirited, and evinced a disposition to abandon the struggle, which Carrera himself could not resist. He had the foresight, however, to make such terms with the government as should best secure his ulterior purposes. On the 23d of December, 1838, a treaty was signed, by the terms of which the insurgents agreed to surrender their arms and recognize the constituted authorities, provided Carrera was made commander of Mita, and a general pardon conceded to all the rebels. Carrera, however, under pretence that it was required to defend the district, continued to keep on foot a considerable force; and, being now invested with a legal authority, came to constitute himself a principal power in the State. This result showed the weakness of the Government, and was Carrera's most effective stride towards the attainment of supreme authority.

This event, and the feverish condition of the country at large, showed that the government, general and state, were powerless for good. They were without resources, and destitute of any principle of common action. Morazan's personal popularity and exertions, alone kept up the appearance of national vitality, and the semblance of order. The Federal Congress met in 1838, and Morazan frankly communicated to it the state of the country. The dispirited members heard in silence; and conscious of their utter weakness seem, from

the first, to have surrendered the Republic to its fate. They passed a decree, conceding to the States many of the powers which had been invested in the General Government, reserving to the latter little more than the management of foreign affairs, and the collection of the customs. This was a virtual recognition of the dissolution of the Republic, and the last act of the Congress, which now immediately dissolved its sessions, and never again assembled. The State Legislature of Guatemala, dismayed at the prospect before it, followed this example.

The several States were thus thrown upon their own resources. Had they been truly wise and patriotic, at this critical moment, they would have sacrificed all their animosities, prejudices, and conflicting opinions upon the altar of the common good. But scattered over a wide expanse of country, with slow and insufficient means of communication, it was impossible for those who desired it to effect an understanding, or devise means to meet the emergency. There were many, also, who saw in a general disruption, a ready means of individual, local advancement. The consequences may readily be anticipated. A convention to revise the Constitution of the State had been called at Nicaragua, to meet in the month of May. The course of the Congress embarrassed its action; it was impossible to define the powers of the State as a member of a Confederation, when that Confederation had virtually surrendered its powers. Regarding itself as bound to provide for the sovereignty which it represented, it declared Nicaragua an independant Republic, and framed a constitution accordingly. It nevertheless adhered to the idea of nationality, and provided for the resumption of its former position, as a State of the Republic, whenever the Confederation should be reörganized. Honduras followed the example of Nicaragua. Costa Rica was revolutionized by a chief named Carillo, who deposed the legally elected governor, Aguilar, and assumed the dictatorship.

He subsequently dispensed with all forms of law, and, for four years, exercised absolute authority. Yet his administration was generally wise and beneficial, and under it that little State made considerable advances in material prosperity.

At the close of the year 1838, the Republic presented a mere wreck, to which San Salvador, Guatemala, and the new State of Los Altos only adhered. Morazan was the sole representative of nationality, and on the 1st of February following, his term of office expired. There was now neither President nor Congress, nor any unity of action amongst the States, for filling the vacancies. Morazan, actuated by a high sense of duty, and still indulging the hope, that by keeping up a central power, the reörganization of the Republic, which all affected to desire, might be secured, under the advice of his friends, determined to maintain his position as President, until a successor should be chosen. He had always asserted the principle, and acted upon it, that it was the duty of the General Government to preserve the integrity of the Confederation; in other words, he denied the right of secession. This was the secret of the opposition to him of a large part of the Liberals. Consistent to the last, he coupled the avowal of his determination to hold on to the supreme authority, with that of compelling the acknowledgment of the Republic, by all the States which had constituted its members.

This avowal led to collisions with Nicaragua and Honduras, already committed to the opposite side, which continued during the entire year, 1839. Notwithstanding the inequality of the contest, the Federal leader, effectively aided by Gen. Cabañas, one of the best and bravest men which the country has ever produced, sustained himself with great success. San Salvador was invaded by the united troops of Nicaragua and Honduras; but after penetrating into the interior, they were defeated in a series of decisive engagements, and being driven into Honduras, that State was over-

run by the Federal forces, who, in turn were defeated and compelled to fall back. While fortune was thus oscillating between the two sections, exhausting and embittering both, and rendering reconciliation impossible, the Serviles in Guatemala were planning an effective demonstration in their own behalf.

They entered into a league with Carrera, and when Morazan became most deeply involved in troubles elsewhere,—troubles which they augmented by every means in their power,—the Indian leader, in response to their call, marched at the head of five thousand men, upon the city of Guatemala. The little garrison of three hundred men offered no resistance, and the Indian, dignified by the title of General, entered, in triumph, the city from which he had been twice expelled. He renewed many of the previous acts of violence against the Liberals, demanding from them $20,000 for himself and men, but, on the whole, behaved with more moderation than on his previous visit. He now became practical Dictator of the State,—installing a government subservient to his wishes, which at once proceeded to proscribe and put to death, all those of opposing politics, whose position, influence, or past conduct had made them obnoxious or dangerous to the usurpers. History recoils from recording the details of this reign of terror; when the sacred forms of law were violated, and made the instruments of hate, revenge, and murder. These acts were followed, in due course, by a declaration of withdrawal from the Republic, and by a convocation of Servile partizans, called a representative council, which decreed that Guatemala constituted a distinct and sovereign state.

And thus was consummated the third triumph of the Serviles in Guatemala. Leagued with Despotism, Priestcraft, and Savage Ignorance, they stood victors amidst the ruins of civil and social order, in a country which they had made desolate and waste. Agriculture was prostrated, commerce

destroyed, and the fountains of public wealth dried up. In the midst of ashes, blood, and desolation, they proceeded to abolish the liberal laws of their predecessors, and, as far as possible to return to the systems of Spain.

In this work of retrogradation none were more active than the priests, who procured the reëstablishment of some of the convents, and were clamorous for a restitution of their tithes and other revenues, as also of their confiscated property. But to their amazement, Carrera peremptorily refused his assent. The Indian had learned the utter selfishness of the priesthood, and was too wise to strengthen and again build up a power, which might be used against himself. The astonished Serviles now found that the chieftain was their master, not their slave!

Meantime the priests in Los Altos, (Quesaltenango), had raised an insurrection, which being promptly seconded by Carrera, resulted in the overthrow of the Liberal or Federal authorities, and the reïncorporation of that State in Carrera's Dictatorship of Guatemala. Guzman, the President, a number of his officers, and many prominent Liberals, were captured by Carrera, and put to death in the most brutal manner. Others fleeing to San Salvador, were overtaken by his subordinates, and murdered by slow tortures, in modes too revolting to be recounted. The history of warfare amongst savages fails to parallel the atrocities which were committed.

San Salvador now stood alone in its recognition of the Republic,—the only stronghold of the Liberal interest. But the spirit of Morazan was unbroken. He determined to make one more effort in behalf of the cause to which his life had been dedicated. And although surrounded by enemies and timid friends, he succeeded in raising a force of twelve hundred men, with which he marched on Guatemala. Nothing could check his advance, and on the 18th of March, 1840, he entered Guatemala. He had relied much upon the popular feeling in his favor in that city; but the spirit of the people

had been broken by the reverses which they had suffered; his friends had been slaughtered or expelled, and he found himself alone and unsupported. A host of enemies closed around him; his force, reduced to less than one thousand men, was hemmed in the principal plaza by upwards of five thousand Indians, under the command of Carrera in person. Comprehending that all was lost, and knowing well that the rules of civilized warfare were not recognized amongst his assailants, Morazan resolved to cut his way through them and effect a retreat. The conflict was terrible; more than half his officers and men were killed, or captured and massacred Twenty-three officers, the chivalry of Central America, who sought the protection of the British flag, were surrendered by the British Consul, and shot like dogs, beneath his portal. Those who reached the French Consulate were saved.

Morazan, having effected his retreat, returned to San Salvador, only to find that the various factions, taking advantage of his misfortunes, had united against him. The truth that all was lost could no longer be disguised; the unfailing hope, which had previously sustained him, whispered not one word of encouragement, and, on a dark and stormy night, emblematic of his fortunes, with a handful of followers, whose attachment no reverses could dampen, nor even death destroy, the last President of the Republic sailed, a fugitive, from the land which he had twice saved from desolation, and to whose welfare he had dedicated his intellect and energies. This little band of exiles, the forlorn hope of the Liberal party, arrived safely in Valparaiso, where they remained for nearly two years.

Carrera feared no man in Central America except Morazan, and elated by the news of his flight, his first impulse, was to grasp at that power in the country at large, which he had now attained in the State of Guatemala. He accordingly raised a large army, and marched into San Salvador. No effectual resistance was made to his progress, which was

marked with robbery and desolation. Siding with one of the local factions, he placed it in power; but finding that the States of Honduras and Nicaragua had united to resist him, and that his Indians lost much of their efficiency when removed from their native hills, he was reluctantly compelled to abandon his scheme of conquest. No sooner, however, had he quited San Salvador, on his return to Guatemala, than the authorities which he had installed, were overthrown by a concurrent movement of the people; and the only result of his invasion, was to inspire them with the deadliest hatred, both of him and his party, which has increased, rather than diminished, with the lapse of time.

CHAPTER VII.

CARRERA—RETURN OF MORAZAN—HIS DEATH—FURTHER DISTRACTION OF THE STATES—ATTEMPTS AT CONFEDERATION—(1841—1851).

The year 1841 witnessed all semblance of nationality destroyed, and the Republic split into five distinct sovereignties, suspicious of each other, the prey of internal factions, and racked by the struggles of unscrupulous partizan leaders.

In Guatemala the members of the Servile Assembly found themselves the simple registers of the will of Carrera, who centered in himself the entire powers of the government. He early discovered the secret of the Servile friendship, and that the leaders of that faction aimed to make his shoulders the stepping-stone of their own elevation. He was no longer the ignorant pig-driver of Mita, the tool of a cunning priesthood, but a successful chieftain, greedy of power, and unscrupulous in his purpose of augmenting and securing it. He favored the views of the Serviles, therefore, only so far as they coincided with his own; he conformed to the law so far as the law could be made to conform to his purposes; but when it stood in the way of these, he hesitated not to evade or wholly disregard it. "You have the physical force of the country, I grant you," said an indignant member of the Assembly, addressing Carrera, in open session, "but the moral force of the country is with us, Señor General!" Carrera made no answer, but soon left the chamber. In fifteen minutes the bayonets of five hundred Indians gleamed

around the hall; the doors were opened wide, and Carrera entering, planted himself in front of the daring member, and pointing to the sable ranks of soldiery, exclaimed, "Here are my Indians! Where is your moral force?"

The priests were eager to procure, not only a restoration of the confiscated property of the church, but also of the tithes and other sources of revenue which had been abolished by the Liberals. Carrera assented to some of these demands, but prohibited the Assembly from passing any laws making the support of the priests obligatory upon the people. "If any one wishes to employ a priest, let him pay for it," was his brief reply to a decree of the Assembly, over which he blotted his pen, when it was presented for his approval.

Costa Rica remained under the dictatorship of Carillo; but, having received a new impulse from the successful introduction of the cultivation of coffee, was quiet and prosperous. It was enabled to pay off its quota of the national debt, and its surplus revenues were devoted to public improvements.

Nicaragua, San Salvador, and Honduras, although having distinct governments, yet cherished the idea of a Republic, and were engaged in constant, but ineffectual attempts to devise a satisfactory basis of union. Finally, however, it was arranged to refer the matter to a Congress of all the States, which was called to meet at Chinandega, in Nicaragua, on the 17th of March, 1842. The proposition met the undivided hostility of Carrera and the Serviles in Guatemala, and of Carillo, in Costa Rica; who not only refused concurrence, but threatened violent opposition to any attempt at national organization. The deputies of the States above named, nevertheless met, and proceeded to decide upon the terms of the union. It was agreed that, the National Government should consist "of a Supreme Delegate, chosen by a majority of the States; a body of Councilors elected in like manner; a Supreme Court of Final Appeals; and that each

State should have its own government and laws, and the control of its own revenues." The jealousy of a strong central power, which had been an active element in the dissolution of the Federation, was strikingly manifested in this *projet* of union. The fact that a government, with such limited powers, and without revenues, could only have a nominal existence, was so obvious, even to the strongest of the Anti-Centralists, that no serious attempt was made to carry the plan into operation.

Although the attempt failed, it yet afforded an evidence that the national spirit was not entirely suffocated; and the immediate friends of Morazan, indulging the belief that the personal hostility to him had, in a great measure, subsided, felt confident that his return would result in a permanent revival of the Federation.

They accordingly pressed him to present himself in the country, assuring him of an enthusiastic reception. Acting under these assurances, in March, 1842, he and his officers embarked at Valparaiso, on board of two vessels, one of which was named *Coquimbo;* and in the month following touched at the Port of La Union, in San Salvador. But finding that the plans of the Liberal Centralists were not yet ripe, he withdrew to the Port of Calderas, in Costa Rica. Here he soon rallied around himself the available force of the country, and marching to the capital, deposed Carillo, and elevated once more the prostrate flag of the Republic. The Legislative Chambers met, elected Morazan governor, and repealed the act separating the State from the Confederation.

This favorable result, in a state hitherto practically most hostile to the Republic, naturally raised the highest hopes in the breasts of Morazan and his officers and friends; who, from the vessel which had brought them, were called Coquimbos. They believed that the people of the various States, wearied of the political disorganization of the country, would declare for the restoration of the Republic, as soon as

the first earnest attempt towards its organization should be made. Morazan, therefore, raised troops, and made arrangements to advance beyond Costa Rica, into Nicaragua. A levy of 2000 men and $50,000 was decreed by the Assembly. But the people of Costa Rica were averse to war; a considerable part of the males fled to the woods to avoid the levy, and it was found necessary to resort to forcible means to carry out the decrees of the Assembly. This served still further to excite dissatisfaction, and facilitated the designs of emissaries sent by the affrighted Serviles and the English agents in Guatemala to undermine Morazan's popularity, and effect his overthrow before he should consolidate his power. At this moment a circumstance transpired which enabled them to strike a decisive blow. One of Morazan's officers, named Molina, a member of an influential Liberal family, forcibly abducted a young lady of rank from her father's house, for which he was arrested by his superior officer, Gen. Rivas. He chose to regard this as an insult, and retaliated by exciting the troops to insurrection, and by putting his commander to death. He was arrested at the Port of Calderas, and sentenced to be shot. The affair caused much excitement; a strong party was formed in favor of the delinquent, and it was feared that an attempt might be made to prevent the execution of the sentence. To guard against this, Morazan sent his confidential General, Sachet, and nearly all the troops upon whom he could rely, to Calderas, retaining around himself only a small guard. His enemies, finding him alone, and almost unprotected, seized upon the favorable moment to declare against him. The fickle populace, following the lead thus given, and in number some 5,000 men, attacked Morazan in San José, the capital. With a little handful of only three or four hundred followers, Morazan defended himself for two days and nights, and then cutting his way through his assailants fled to the city of Cartago, where, failing to receive assistance, he, with his two

sons and principal adherents, was taken prisoner, brought back to San José on the 18th of September, 1842, and immediately shot. Thus died the ablest, and in many respects the best, man which Central America ever produced. To Costa Rica belongs the odium of an act revolting to humanity, which, while it has forever arrayed the Liberal party against her, has secured for her the unenviable fellowship of the Servile faction in Guatemala, with which State she has ever since been identified in policy.

When the news of Morazan's capture reached his supporters on the coast, it was hardly credited; yet Gen. Cabañas, at the head of a small but chosen body of men, immediately started to relieve him. He had not proceeded far, when he was met by a Spaniard, named Espinach, who professed great friendship for Morazan, and who assured Cabañas that the General was not only in no personal danger, but was already on his way to the coast. Deceived by this information, the force returned to Calderas, where shortly after arrived the news of the atrocity at San José. Morazan's friends were struck aghast; his private secretary, Miguel Saravia, a man of extensive accomplishments, committed suicide; but death failed to sever the ties which had bound his followers to the cause of the Liberal chieftain. Their fortunes were now desperate; but they were true to the principles which they had espoused. They embarked on board some vessels in the harbor; and after blockading the port for some weeks, set sail for San Salvador. Here they were received and befriended by Malespin, then practically controlling the affairs of the State. This man had first attained notoriety as a highway robber, and had headed an insurrection against Morazan during his ascendancy in San Salvador, but had been defeated and driven into exile. He had subsequently returned with Carrera, and by him raised to the command of the forces, under the supposition that he would prove an uncompromising enemy of the Liberal party. But he soon found that the

Liberals, although divided on many questions, still predominated in the State, and shaped his course accordingly, with the ultimate view of strengthening his own power. He now saw an opportunity of conciliating the friends of Morazan, and securing them to his interest; and therefore, not only welcomed the Coquimbos, but shared amongst them many of the offices of the Government. This politic step, and the other means which he had adopted to conciliate his enemies, placed him at the head of the Government; and with his dashing manners, and decisive character, it at one time appeared as if his sway might spread over the adjacent States. Carrera and the Serviles were alarmed at this turn of affairs, but hesitated in coming to blows with their former associate. They however connived at an expedition, organized in Guatemala, for the invasion of San Salvador, by Gen. Arce, the first President and the betrayer of the Republic; who was now reduced, as if in punishment for his crimes, to the condition of a common adventurer. The expedition proved a total failure; and the act was at once disavowed by Carrera and the Serviles of Guatemala, who actually arrested and imprisoned their miserable tool, in order to give a color of sincerity to their protestations. But Malespin was not to be deceived; he raised a force, and retaliated, by invading Guatemala. The advance was made with such vigor and success, that it is likely the State would have been subdued, had not Malespin been recalled by an insurrection amongst his own troops, whom he had left behind. They had never been attached to their leader; and, Liberals at heart, declared for Gen. Cabañas, one of the best of Morazan's officers, a man of unimpeachable character, moderate principles, and humane disposition, and a proverb of bravery. And although Cabañas, true to his own reputation, refused to accept the command to the injury of his benefactor, Malespin, indignant at the preference shown to another, not only withdrew from Guatemala, but disbanded the forces supposed to be

least favorable to himself; and by his conduct laid the foundation of a quarrel, which terminated in his own destruction. Carrera in turn invaded San Salvador; but, fearful of being served in like manner with Malespin, he fell back without accomplishing anything worthy of remark.

After the death of Morazan, the States became not only divided in themselves, but amongst themselves. They were racked, not so much by partizan, as individual struggles for supremacy, and thus reduced to a lower and more repugnant form of anarchy. In Guatemala, as we have seen, Carrera had raised himself to supreme power; in San Salvador, Malespin was the irresponsible head of affairs; a man by the name of Ferrara held a similar position, under the denomination of President in Honduras; another, named Fonseca, styled himself Grand Marshal in Nicaragua; and still another, Alfaro, with the title of Provisional Chief, ruled in Costa Rica.

While the country was distracted by these struggles, and powerless to resist any act of encroachment, however flagrant; when the last prop of Nationality had fallen; the English agents at Belize thought the opportunity favorable for the execution of their long cherished designs on the Mosquito shore.

Accordingly in 1841, Col. Macdonald, the superintendant, left that establishment in a British vessel of war, and coasted along the coveted territory,—dispensing presents to the Indians, and pulling down the Central American flag wherever it was found flying. He visited San Juan, seized the Nicaraguan commander of the port, Col. Quijano, carried him on board his vessel, committed various personal indignities upon him, and then, after procuring his signature to certain documents, put him on shore on a distant coast. He also visited Roatan, and notwithstanding the disavowal of 1830, again seized it, pulled down the flag of Honduras, and having, in the significant language of British diplomacy in Central

America, "properly instructed," the inhabitants, returned to Belize. This act was never disavowed; on the contrary, when the government of Honduras pressed the restitution of the island upon the English Cabinet, the matter was cut short by a letter from Mr. Chatfield, saying that the act of Macdonald was performed under the orders of the British Government. The felony thus initiated, was consummated on the 10th of August last, 1851, when Roatan, Bonaca, Utila, and the other islands on the northern coast of Honduras, were formerly declared annexed to the superintendancy of Belize, under the denomination of the "Bay Islands."

The results of British aggressions have been summed up, by a British author, in the following terms: "To sum up our acquisitions in Central America, we have, at the present time, exclusive of such smaller items as Roatan and Tigre Islands, a total of 66,600 square miles, or 38,784,000 acres,[1] over which we exercise full control, *being nearly a third of Central America, and equal to two thirds of the area of Great Britain.*"

The details of the contests within and between the several States, have no general interest. Those contests were seldom for the vindication of principles; they originated chiefly in the misdirected ambitions, the bad passions, and the jealousy of the men who had the general direction of affairs, and who were rarely raised to power on the score of merit. After a protracted controversy with Honduras and San Salvador, Nicaragua, having sided with the "Coquimbos," was invaded by the united forces of these States, under the com-

[1] Crow's Central America, p. 220. Mr. Crow is mistaken in respect to Tigre Island. It was evacuated by the English within two months after its seizure. For a complete history of what is called the "Musquito Question," and of English interference in the domestic affairs of the Central American States, see "American Whig Review" for February, March, and November, 1850, and March, 1851.

mand of Malespin, in 1844. Leon was the first town which offered any effectual resistance, and in the siege which followed, it suffered all the terrors of Central American warfare. It was defended, by an inferior force, with a desperation unsurpassed in history, but was finally carried, after a protracted siege, over the corpses of its garrison. After this event, Nicaragua remained in quiet, with the exception of a local insurrection, headed by a man named Chelon, which was promptly suppressed, until the seizure of San Juan by the English, in January, 1848, and the insurrection of Samoza, in 1849. Within the present year, 1851, further disturbances have taken place, of the precise nature of which we are yet uninformed. What will be the final result, the future alone can determine.

As before stated, an attempt was made, in 1842, to reconstruct the confederation, which failed. Another attempt was made in 1847. A convention was called of all the States, to meet at Nacaome, in Honduras. But representatives appeared only from Nicaragua, Honduras, and San Salvador. These, nevertheless, proceeded to agree upon certain bases, which were afterwards known as the "Pact of Nacaome." This Pact was rather an act of close alliance than of confederation, and was neither acceptable to the Centralists nor Federalists. It does not appear to have met the concurrence of any of the States, and consequently never went into effect.

When Mr. Hise was commissioned as Chargé d'Affaires of the United States to Guatemala, in 1848, he was instructed, "whilst it is the intention of the United States to maintain its established policy of non-intervention in the concerns of foreign nations," that nevertheless, it would be his duty, by his "counsel and advice, should suitable occasion offer, to promote the reunion of the States which formed the Confederation of Central America." These instructions were made part of those of his successor, who, within one month after

his arrival in Nicaragua,—on the 1st of August, 1849,—took occasion to apprise the respective governments of the desires of the United States in this respect. The result was the appointment of commissioners on the parts respectively of Honduras, San Salvador and Nicaragua, who met in Leon in the month of November following, and agreed upon a union under the title of the "National Representation of Central America." The provisions of the Pact were few and simple, and by its terms both Costa Rica and Guatemala were invited to enter into the new union.

This Pact was *unanimously* ratified by the three States above named, and went into effect on the 9th of January, 1851, when the National Representatives met in the city of Chinandega, in Nicaragua![1] Don Jose Barrundia, an eminent Liberalist of San Salvador, was elected President.

From the House of the Government, the President and Representatives, accompanied by the officers of State, and the troops of the line of Nicaragua, proceeded to the Cathedral, and joined in the *Te Deum* in commemoration of this auspicious event. Appropriate demonstrations of joy were made in the various States. In recording it, the official Gazette of Nicaragua, exclaims as follows:—"After ten years of tempest and devastation, the rainbow of hope again spans the horizon of Central America—welcome, token of peace and prosperity. God grant that, with the experiences of the past to guide us, our future career may be marked by harmony and by wisdom, and conform to the high example which is afforded to us, by the Great Republic of North America."

[1] The American Government seems to have been utterly ignorant of this fact, as late as June of this year, when it commissioned a Charge d'Affaires to Nicaragua, *a State of the new Confederation!* Of course the government of Nicaragua could not receive this officer, who, at latest accounts, was living in Leon, in the capacity of a private citizen.

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Squier, Ephraim George.
Nicaragua

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DATE DUE | BORROWER'S NAME

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Squier, Ephraim George.
Nicaragua

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HOLY NAME[illegible]BRARY
3500 Mountain Boulev[illegible]land, CA 94619
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